

**A Right Godly and
learned discourse vpon
the booke of Ester.**

Most necessary for this time and age, to instruct all noble men, and such as God hath advanced vnto high places about princes, that God looketh for this as an especiall due to at their handes, principally to endeavour themselves to procure the wealth of God his people, and the benefite and good of his church, and withall to teach the seruants of the Lord that are in danger and miserie, with patience and prayer to attend vpon the Lord untill hee send them deliuerance.

Written in latyn by Iohn Brentius a German, and newly turned into English for the comfort of God his children, by Iohn Stocks wood Schoolemaster of Tunbridge.

Ester. 4. vers. 14.

For if thou holdest thy peace at this time, comfort & deliuerance shall appere vnto the Iewes out of an other place, but thou and thy fathers house shall perish: and who knoweth whether thou art come vnto the kingdom for such a time?

L O N D O N

Imprinted by Iohn Wolfe for Iohn Harrison the younger, dwelling at the signe of the golden Anker in Parer noster row.

1 5 8 4.

A Right Godly and

learned discourse upon

the resurrection

of the dead, and of the
life to come, by
the learned and
right honorable
man, Sir John
Hales, knight,
and one of the
justices of the
Commons in
Parliament assembled.

London, Printed by
I. Blount, at the
 signe of the
 Gunne, in
St. Dunstons Church
Lane, 1633.

For the sale of
this book, the
price is set at
one penny
the piece.

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St. Dunstons Church
Lane, 1633.

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To the Right honorable Sir
Francis Walsingham Knight, prin-
cipall Secretarie vnto her Maieltie, of
the right honorable priny counsaile, &c.

Grace and peace and all true felicitie in
Iesus Christ our Sauour.



HERE are now almost nine
yeares passed (Right honora-
ble) since you wrote your
most cardeous & earnest let-
ters for my preserment to the
Schoole of Tunbridge, where
I haue so long time continued
in the both painefull & thank-
lesse office of a poore Schole-
master, carrying alwayes a thankfull remembrance,
and duetyfull mindfulness of your honorable kindnes
shewed vnto me a meere straunger vnto you, and wi-
shing continually nothing more, then to see that day
once to shine, wherein I might leaue some testimony
vnto posteritie of that vnfayned thankfulness, the
which of good right before this time I was to haue
rendred, in due regard of assured experience of vnde-
serued gentlenes. Hauing therefore turned into En-
glish this short and most comfortable discourse vpon
the booke of Ester, I haue made bold to presume to
offer the same vnto the fauourable acceptation of
your honorable wisdom, as well to testify my grate-
full remembrance of your singular clemency, as also
for to signifie vnto the whole church of God, the re-
uerent affection that I beare vnto your Honor, in re-
spect of many notable and heavenly graces that the
Lord hath plentifully enriched you wythall for the
good of his Church, and the benefite of hys poore
faithfull seruants. And as in this consideration, the
godly are much bound to praise the most highest for
the painefull indeuour and diligent trauaile of your
Honor, and sondry others of your place, for the wel-
fare of Sion, and for the prosperitie of Ierusalem: so

because that our old enemy the Deuill, with his thousand wiles ceaseth not with tooth and naile to labour to quench the flame of these so excellent graces, many times in the godly of great callings themselves, that they should not burne brightly out, to the chearing of the apaled and benumbed members of the Saintes of God, who being cheered with the comfortable warmth of the same, he perceiue what hindrance they might bee to the flourishing of his kingdom, I haue purposedly chosen, to present in particular to your Honor (whome the children of God both of our owne church at home, and also abroad in other countreys, as occasion hath bene offered, hath found forward in all their good causes) and in generall to all that by credite and authoritie may do any thing with Princes, the more neerer view & through examination of the seuerall circumstances of this most excellent history, which duely considered, (if any other in the whole scripture) may encourage the boldly, yea if it were in times of most present and greatest daunger, to aduenture to speake for the wealth of the church, and wellfare of Israell. Yea there is no place, that doth more liuely (as it were in colours) paint out the estate of the church, the many daungers she is in, the number of aduersaries, their suttile shiftes, & craftie practises, the churches deliuerance, her enemies confusion, the bad ende of such as abuse their dignity and authority with great kinges and potentates, to the molesting of the true professors, & the good successe which God giueth vnto suche as beinge set in high roomes about mighty Monarches, vse their places to countenance the godly, against the pestilent policies of all proud and ambitious Amans.

But because all these things being looked vpon as they lie in grosse, cannot shew the like fruite, as when they are sorted and laid open, euery thing by it selfe in particular, it shall not be painefull vnto me, nor vndelectable vnto your Honor, together wyth all others that shall wyth a single eye search into the same, to consider somewhat more at large of the principall circumstances of this history, whereby the profite that
may

Dedicatōie.

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may come by the same, may the better appeare. First therefore the estate of the church at this tyme was most miserable and lamentable. For besides the present captiuitie and bondage that it was in, there was now also intended against it, vtter subuersion and destruction: the crimes that it is charged with, but falsely, are not small: namely no lesse then impietie & rebellion: the aduersary that accuseth it, a vile and accursed Amalekite, descending of the bloody race of the most cruell king Agag, and yet at this instant in the highest autoritie of all the princes in Persia next vnto the king: his accusation beloved of the too credulous king, his request graunted, sealed wyth the kings ring, which accordinge vnto the law of the Medes & Persians, made that the thing was vnreuoceable and not to be called back againe: a certaine & an appointed day of their massacre and butchery set downe, and the letters of this determination wyth all expedition sent by Postes into all prouinces of kinge Ahasuerosch his dominions. What was now to be looked for of the poore dispersed and scattered Iewes, but cruelly with all extremity to be executed, not onely vpon themselues, & also all their goods, but (which doubles was their greatest griefe) vpon their scely babes, & guilelesse infantes.

What was there now left in the sight & iudgement of man that might bring vnto these distressed persons any comfort or hope of deliuerance? Queene Ester, you will say, was their country woman, who no doubt would sue for their pardon vnto the king her husband, and that so much the rather for because the sute was preferred vnto her by Mordecai her godly vncle, who was most deare vnto her, and had bene vnto her as a father, after the death of her parents? In deepe Mordecai slept not this busines: but how much a doo had he, before hee could win the Queene to stirre in this matter, albeit the same touched, and that most neerely, euen her owne life? So many colourable excuses had the subtile enemy layd before her (as he doth continually before others of like place in such cases) to cause her to withdraw her helping hand in this extre-

*The most miserable
and pittifull estate
of the church in the
time of Ester.*

*The subtiltie of
Satan.*

*An other double
cause,*

*A third most
weightie temptation*

unity of the church of God. First he could tell her, that for her owne part she needed to feare no daunger, for that beinge Queene, howsoeuer other smarted shee should feele no paine, for who would bee so bold, as once to presume to laye violent handes vpon the wyfe of the king, whom he also so tenderly loued? Secondly if this haire take not, and that the Queene shoulde happely thinke that it was not sufficient that she her selfe was in safetie, and without the reach of the shot (as they say) but that she must also so farre as in her lyeth, be carefull for the safegard of others, especially of the congregation of the Lord: then he layeth before her eyes an other, and the same a double hooke bayted with daunger of present death on the one side, (for whosoener aduentured to enter in before the king vncalled for, should dye the death, if the king held not out vnto him, the golden scepter) and on the other side with the perswasion of some displeasure of the king conceyued towards her already, for that she had not beene called to come vnto the king by the space of thirtie dayes, the rather to make her belieue, that there was no hope that the king woulde vouchsafe her that curtesie of stretching out his rod vnto her for the sauing of her life, and that by this means for feare of death, she should leaue of to speak in the cause and behoofe of her people. Thirdly, if this way he cannot preuaile neither, then to make her verily to despaire of doing any good by speaking. hee calleth no doubt vnto her remembrance, that it should be but lost labor once to open her lips on the Iewes behalfe, for that the decree concerning their vtter destruction being sealed with the kinges ring, it could not by any meanes be reuerfed or vndone, so that as the one way she might assure her selfe that her trauell would be bootles, because of the Persian lawe to the contrarie, so on the other side it might cost her, her life, by another law of the king, if graciously hee did not stretch out his scepter. It might also in this place be noted, how great a matter it might be thought to be to attempt to say any thing on their side, who were accused.

accused by such a one, as who in all the lande but he, in such fauor with the king as that nothing was too hote or too heauie for him (as they say) and the matters preferred against the Iewes being so hainous, as rebellion & contrarie religion vnto the king, that who would once aduenture to open his mouth to plead for their pardon: For this is a thing, that doth not a litle terrifie and dismay euery good men many times, so that they dare not freely deale for the deliuerie of such, no albeit their cause be as good as it of the innocent Iewes was, if they vnderstand them to bee complained and laboured against, by some mightie aduersarie. Yea too too often we for our owne parts, when there is not any of these encombrances, whereby *Ester* might peraduenture iustly to fleshe and bloude haue seemed excusable, can with *Solomon* his sluggard euen at noone day, and in the open streetes pretend, that there is a Lyon in the way, when we shoulde employ our endeouour for the good of the Church. But our *Ester* admonished by *Mordecai*, that God for this purpose had aduanced her vnto that royal estate of princely maiestie, at length all lettes put aparte, and all the stumpling blockes of *Sathan* being ouerstriden, raketh in hand this most weightie cause, beginning at prayer and fasting (a notable example in all like causes to be folowed) and that not onely in her selfe and her maidens, but also willing the same effectually to be done of all the Iewes in Shushan, God giuing such wonderfull successe vnto her enterprise, that contrarie vnto all expectation of man, to the shame & confusion of her aduersaries, she obtaineth safetie and deliuerance for her selfe and her people. Such a most wise and most mighty God haue we, that euen in greatest daungers and most desperat cases, both can and will blesse the godlie endeouours of his faithfull that vse their authoritie for the benefit and furtherance of his Saintes and children.

Nowe if *Hester* a woman, in the captiuitie of the church, maketh sure vnto an heathen king, a worshipper of false Gods, and altogether ignorant of the true God, in a cause of her people the Church

The profit that Christian magistrates are to make of this example and fact of Ester.

Church of God, accused falsly by the greatest person in the Realme, not vnto any of the Counsaile or inferior magistrates, but euen vnto the king himselfe, and that in a matter of impietie and rebellion as was pretended, yea and that at such a time, as the wisdom of man would haue iudged it most safely to haue saide nothing, the entring in to speake before the King, being an enterprisc carrying with it no lesse daunger then the present losse of life, or if that tell not out, yet the labour being such as might seeme to be in vaine and to no purpose, in as much as their murther ratyfyed with the kings Seale, could not be called back againe: What excuse then shall those be able to alledge, which hauing the chifest places of credit, and countenance vnder christian kinges and princes, not in the persecution, but the peace of the Gospell, not in the thraldome, but in the libertie of the church, not in the cloudes of ignorance, and the darke mist of superstition, but in the cleere light of the trueth, and bright shyning sunne of sincere religion, wyll not vouchsafe to imploy their care, trauaile, labour, and endeouour for the benefite of the church, for the furtherance of religion, for the wellfare of the godly, for the rayfinge vp of the spirituall temple, and the building againe of the decayed walles of Ierusalem, and the hedging in of the vineyard of the Lorde, that the wilde boare of the Forrest root it not vp, so that the Israell of God may haue great cause of ioy and thanks giuing, when as it shall see the temple of the Lord to be cleansed, the tables of the money chaungers and them that sell dooues, ouerthrowne, the buyers and sellers wyth the scourge of godly discipline whipped out of the church, and finally the house of God so purged, that it may become of good, better, of better, best of all, that is of perfect, moste perfect, of pure, most pure, so farre as in thys imbecillitye and weakenes of the flesh, by the assistance of God his holy spirite may be attayned vnto: not, that with the Catharoi or Puritane heretikes, of whome S. Austine complayneth, wee shoulde dreame of such a purenes and freedome from sinne in regard of others, that we should count

our

Catharoi or Puritane, were a sect of heretikes, which did most proudly boast themselves

our selues more pure or holy then they (albeit euery true christian ought so farre as it shall please God, by the effectuall working of his grace to strengthen him, to labour to kepe himself vnspotted of the pollutions of the wicked and sinnefull world) but that the church might be presented as a pure virgin, without spotte or wrinkle, vnto her spouse Christ Iesus, being purified and cleansed from all such corruptions of doctrine or ceremonies as are contrary vnto hys moste holyc and heauenly word. Which reformation where it is wanting, there nothing is to be attempted disorderly, or to the breach of the godly vnity of the church, but it is the part of all in generall by prayer to craue it earnestly at the hands of the Lorde, by enlighteninge of the heartes of the kinge and chiefe rulers, that they may see into the wantes and imperfections of hys house & spirituall Ierusalem, and more then this, it is required of *Shaphan* the chaunceler, & the rest of the nobles, together with *Hilkiah* the priest, and the other priests and Leuites, at all conuenient seasons, to be callinge vpon godly Iosias, that the Chemarims priuily lurking in some great mens houses, together wyth all other abominations may be cleane rooted out of the land.

This then is one especiall lesson whiche is set out in Queene Ester as a worthy president for all noble men and great personages to learne (& this one well learned may sufficiently commend the profite of thys short discourse, if there were no more) namely, that they vse the countenance of their places, & the height of their dignity for the preferment and benefite of the people of God, which are hys church. Thys duty doth God require of kinges and rulers in the Psalme, when hee saith: *Beware now therefore, ye kinges: be learned ye Iudges of the earth. Serue the Lord in feare, and reioyce in trembling.* &c. And what greater seruice or more acceptable duty can they I pray performe vnto the Lorde, then in mainetayninge of pure religion agreeable vnto hys word, and causing that his people in life and conuersation expresse the same. And that thys is the chiefe end, why God promoteth great potentates and mighty rulers vnto such high and singular gouernement, is

to be more pure than others, both in life and maners, & did therefore separate themselves from the other company of christians, as being more holy then they, and therefore had their name, about the yeare after the Passion of Christ 223. Which name hath since bene maliciously and craftely geuen vnto the true and sincere professors of the Gospel, to bring them into the more hatred among men. Zeph. 1.4.

Psalm. 2. 10. 11.

3. 70. 71. 72. right well declareth in the 78. Psalme, where it is set
 downe, that God tooke *Dauid* from the shepfoldes,
 and brought him from behinde the Ewes with yong,
 to feede his people in *Isaac*, and his inheritance in
Israell. This thing also *Dauid* with all diligence and
 readinesse performed, as in the selfe same place it is
 most evidently and plainly testified in these wordes:
*So he fedde them in the simplicitie of his heart, and guided
 them by the direction of his hands.* If these be the seruices,
 which our god requireth at the hands of those whom
 he hath aduanced vnto the highest places: if those
 that haue the direction of all the matters vnder their
 gouernment, must account it their chiefest duety and
 office to serue the Lord in feare, to feede his people
 in *Isaac*, and his inheritance in *Israel*, then truly all
 such as are inferior magistrates vnder them, ought to
 bend their deuices and studies to this end and pur-
 pose. If promotion come neyther from the East, nor
 from the West, neyther from the North, nor from the
 South, but onely from the Lord aboue, which dispo-
 seth all things in earth according vnto his good will
 and pleasure: then surely all such as are promoted by
 him, must apply all their honor and aduancement for
 the honor and glory of him by whome they are pre-
 ferred and aduanced, who acknowledging himselfe
 to be honored, when the messengers and messages
 which are sent in his name are honored, and for his
 sake receyued, it must follow of necessitie, that such
 as are by him preferred, must principally with al faith-
 full seruiceablenes to please him, who hath in such
 mercifull sorte exalted and preferred them. And be-
 cause (as hath beene proued before) nothing is so
 deare vnto him as the maintenance of his pure religi-
 on, and the followers of the same, it can not bee cho-
 sen, but that he requireth this as a most speciall duety
 of men of greatest callings, that they render this thanke-
 fulnesse vnto him that hath placed them in the seat of
 such excellling honor aboue their brethren, to fore-
 show no occasion of procuring wealth of his Church,
 and benefit of his children, in so much as the flouri-
 shing of his house ought to be the ioy of his Nobles,
 and

and the ruine of his temple, the sorrowe and sadnesse of the very highest in his congregation, howsoever otherwise in regard of their owne persons they might seeme verie happy, and wanting no earthly or worldly commoditie. Which thing that most godly and noble gentleman *Nehemias* full well vnderstanding, when he heareth of the captiuitie of his cuntrimen, of their affliction and reproach in the same, and how the wall of Ierusalem was broken downe, and the gates thereof burnt with fire, it abandoned all his mirth, and put to flight all his pleasures, yea driueth him to mourning and weeping, fasting and praying for the remedie of these miseries, so that he can not be comforted, but must euen before the Heathen King, in countenance bewray his greate heavinesse for the same, the which God vsed as a conuenient meane to moue *Artahasth*, to enquire of the cause of his griefe, and so vpon the opening of the same euen vnto an infidell, and also an enimie to the religion of him and his cuntrimen, to graunt what he woulde aske for the redresse of the same.

Nehemias

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And here againe it is wonderfull to marke and consider how God granting first vnto *Ester* a woman, and secodly vnto *Nehemias*, a godly noble man, both in the bondage of the Church, and captiuitie of their people, such fauour in the sight of Heathen and prophane princes, that they had choise giuen them to aske what they would, they being as it were wholly set on fire with the zeale of the church & people of God, craue nothing but the wealth, libertie, prosperitie, and good of the same, forgetting their owne priuate profit and commoditie, not begging or sueing for landes, riches, or promotion, whereby they might be enriched and aduanced, but onely procuring the benefit and preferment of the professors of the true religion and worship of God. O worthie example for all noble men to follow, O notable lesson of al greatesse personages to be marked. O most excellent president to be practised, of such as are most in fauour with Kinges and greatesse rulers. This godly care for the seruants of the Lorde, wee read to haue bene in
that

A notable president for such as are in greatesse fauour with Princes.

*Terentius a most
gaily Christian
Captaine.*

Chaggai, 1.4.5.6.

that most valiant and Christian captaine Terentius, whome when as the Emperour Valence was miaded to preferre in regarde of his good seruice in the wars, and giuing a mightie ouerthrowe vnto his enemies, he bid him aske what request hee woulde of him, and promised that it should be graunted. Terentius not minding his owne gaine, but the benefit of the church, not seeking his owne aduancement, but the furtherance of the glory of God, not caring to enrich him selfe, but carefull to procure some good for the Christians, by supplication craueth that the Emperour his maiesty would graunt, that the Christians might haue a Temple buylded to worship God in, apart from the Arian heretikes. At this request, Valence being sore displeased, reareth his supplication, and in great anger flingeth it vnto the ground, willing him to aske some other thing that might be more for his preferment, but Terentius with a sorowful cheare and heauie countenance gathering vp the peeces of his supplication, answered: I haue my rewarde, I will aske nothing els. This noble gentleman had wel learned this lesson, that God aduanced men to honor, for to doe good vnto his Church. And this lesson I pray God, may be learned and folowed of all true nobility. For as for such as thinke that the care of the Church appertaineth not vnto the, neyther are touched with any regarde of the repaying and setting vp of Ierusalem, the praise of the world: (as the Prophet spebeth) let them heare what the Lord saith by the hand of his seruant Maggai the Prophet: Is it time for your selues to dwell in your sieled houses, and this house lye wast? Now therefore thus saith the Lorde of hostes, consider your owne wayes in your heartes. You haue sowne much, and bring in litle: ye eate, and haue not inough: ye drinke, but ye are not filled: ye cloth you, but you are not warme: and hee that earneth wages, putteth the wages into a broken bagge: meaning, that nothing can prosper long with them, that bestow not their trauell for the buylding vp of the house of the Lord. But such as taste most of princes bounties, and sit in the highest seates in kings houses, & are in
greatest

greatest fauour with mightie rulers, and doe lay aside this so necessarie a care & ductifull seruice vnto God, giuing themselues wholly to follow their owne pleasures, feeding of the finest and sweetest meates, drinking of the best and most delicate drinkes, smelling of the most excellent and fragrant odours, clothed with the softest and brauest appar el, lying vpon their beds of downe, and delighting their eares with most curious and delectable melodie, the Prophet bloweth out vnto them a loude trumpe to wake them out of their cradle of securitie, in which they lye lulled so deeply and sweetely a sleepe, crying, Wo to them that are at ease in Zion and trust in the mountaine of Samaria, that put farre away the euill day, and aproch vnto the seate of iniquitie. They lye (saith he) vpon beddes of Iuori, and stretch them selues vpon their beddes, and eate the lambes of the flocke, and the calves out of the Stall. They sing to the sound of the viole: they inuent to them selues instruments of Musicke like Dauid: they drinke wine in bowles, and anoynt them selues with the chiefe ointments, but no man is sorie for the affliction of Ioseph. And as the punishment there threatned vnto them is captiuitie into Babilon, so these being alredie captiues vnto Sathan, shall in the end, if they repent not, be bound in chaines and fetters, and cast into euerlasting darkenesse.

Amos. 6. 1. 4. 5. 6.

Well, as in Ester there is set forth a commendable and godly example for all noble men to folow in aduenturing their wealth, honor, dignity, countenance, credit, authoritie, yea and life too, for the good and welfare of the Church: So in Aman there is to be seene a most perfect paterne of a malicious & subtile enimie vnto the Church and people of God, good for them to know, that they may be armed against the like practises, and worthie the due and heedefull consideration euen at the handes of the wicked, by the horrible end that befell him, to terrifie & fray them from vsing their power, fauour, and authoritie with the mightie gouernours of this world, against the true Christians, and sincere professors of his religion and Gospell. Let vs see then how cunningly this mortal

The second use of this historie is of the example of Aman & his practices against the church of God.

and

and deadly enemie vnto the poore disperfed and scattered people of the Iewes, who then were onely the Church of God, can play his part.

First of all, when as but one man had offended him, namely *Mordecai* the Iewe, in that he would do no manner of reuerence vnto him, he is by and by inflamed with such a fire of enuie, that he can not satisfie him selfe with the death of him alone, but must needs seeke the destruction of all the Iewes, both men, women, & children, that were in the whole kingdome of *Affuerus*. Wherein he doth full liuely expresse the olde hatred which his auncestors the Amalekites of whose wicked race he came, did beare vnto the Israelites, vpon the weakest, wearieft, & hindmost of the which, as they came out of the land of Egypt, they fell and without pittie or mercie slewe: which their villanie, treacherie, and bloudie crueltie God did so greatly detest and abhorre, as we may reade in the 25. chapter of the booke of Deuteronomium, that he straightly chargeth the Children of Israell to haue it alwaies in their mind, and that they put out the remembrance of *Amalek* from vnder heauen, that is, vterly to destroy them, which thing *Saule* refusing for to doe, and sparing their bloudie king *Agag* (the greates grand father of this proud *Aman*) together with the fattest of the spoile for sacrifice, as he pretended, the Lord thrust him from the throne of his kingdome, and gaue the same vnto his faithfull seruant *Dauid*.

*The sleights of
Aman.*

In the second place is to be noted what sleights he vseth to bring his diuelish purpose to passe, namely lying coloured with craftines, & a faire shew of tranquillity & peace by the rooting out of the Iewes, likely to ensue in al the dominiõ of the king, besids great treasurs that should by this means be brought into his Exchequer & cofers. *There is a people* (saith he) *scattered and disperfed among al the people in all the prouinces of thy kingdome, and their lawes are diuers from all people, and they do not obserue the kinges lawes: therefore it is not the kinges profit to suffer them.* These wordes are few, but conteine in them matter of much lewdenes, & great mischief. Hauing no doubt a subtil & pestilent head,

and

and with a most enuious and ambitious minde, be debated these matters more at large with the king, but the holy Ghost is content for the instructiō of the Church, onely to note the summe and effect of the same, where in his craftie lying, or lying craftines is most evidently to be seene. For he saith not simplie & plaineely, as the truth indeed was, there is, O King, one *Mordecai*, a Jew, and one of them of the captiuitie who knowing me to come of that vile race of the Amalekites, which most despitetully vsed the people of Israel in their returne out of Egypt, in such shamefull sort, that God willed them neuer to forget this vilany, and therefore appointing vs vnto the curse, hath commanded our remembrance to be blotted out frō vnder heaven, in which regarde, king *Agag*, of whose house I come, was hewen in peeces by *Samuel* the prophet. This *Mordecai* (I say) moued with these and such like considerations, when as al others do me honor and reuerēce, will neither bow nor bend vnto me, the which his disloyalty goeth so neare my hart, that all the dignitie and preferment, wherunto I am aduanced, will do me no good, vnles I may be reuenged of this despite. vnto my contentation, who burne with such a thirst of bloud, that al the bloud in the body of *Mordecai*, is not so much as one litle drop, to the quenching of y same, & therefore that I may haue my ful draught, command I pray thee that the whole nations of the Jewes both men, women & children through out all thy dominions may at one time be put to death, and their remembrance be taken out from among men. This was it which in heart he conceyued, how to euer he handle the matter otherwise in wordes. But if he had gone thus plainly to worke, he knew wel inough that his malicious purpose would soone be spyed, and so peraduenture his request haue beene denied, and therefore he vseth lying and craft, the rather to bring his deuises about, falslie accusing them of sedition and rebellion, and with all shewing the King how much his wealth might by their death bee increased, promising him masses of money, and infinite summes of coine to bee brought into the
 kings

Kinges treasures, the which if he ment should be paide out of his owne substance, as some writers suppose, & among them (*Iosephus*, according vnto which iudgement of interpreters we may see that enuie will not care to begger and vndo her selfe, to wreake her malice vpon her enimie, or rather him whome shee enuyeth, albeit he hath done her no maner of wrong in the world, Or whether he thought to raise it of the spoyle of those which should be slaine, he vied it as a baite the rather to drawe on the kinge to the liking of his sute, the which proceeding of priuat rankor, is cloaked notwithstanding with desire of the kings benefite and enriching, together with a pretence of great peace and quyetnesse that was hereby likely to insue vnto the whole kingdome: for thus much doth his accusation import, if it be thoroughly looked into, as is more at large set downe by the Authour of this discourse.

The vse of this example of Aman.

We see then first in *Aman* what enuie and ambition meeting together can doe, namely that it can procure the partie in whome it taketh place, to bende all his studie, labor, trauell, and policies to seeke the vtter ruine, yea euen of the Church of God; making him quite and cleane to forget all thankfulness vnto God for aduancing him vp from low estate, vnto the high top of dignitie, & for taking him from the dunghill (as *Anna* in her song speaketh) to place him amongst princes, and causing him further to imploy his preferment, which he hath receyued at the handes of God for the furtherance of God his children, and the maintenance of his Church, and the vtter defacing of true religion, and extreame destruction of the most sincere folowers and embracers of the same. So that whereas *Aman* to testifie his duetifull remembrance of God his most louing kindenesse in lifting vp his horn so high aboue the rest of his fellowes, should seeke the good of poore *Mordecai*, and the rest of the scattered and disperied Iewes, this enuie and ambition will egge him forward in stead hereof to prefer him as the most wicked of all others, to be hanged on the highest gallows, and all the rest of the Iewes; thought

though indeed the true Church of God, yet as rebels vnto *Ahasuerus* his lawes, and as men not to be suffered to liue in any cōmō wealth, to be appointed, their liues vnto the slaughter, and their goods to the spoile, and all these for nothing els but because *Mordecai* will do no reuerence vnto proud *Amas*, whom God holdeth accursed.

Secondly, wee learne that it is no newe thing for the Church and people of God to be accused before the kinges and rulers of this world of great and notorious crimes, as impietie, rebellion, treason, sedition, disobedience vnto princes lawes and ordinances. For the scriptures of God doe asorde vs here of most plentiful examples. Reading the fourth Chapter of the booke of *Ezra*, wee shall there find the notable practises of the enemies of God to hinder the people of the Iewes from building vp againe of the ruinous walles of Ierusalem, and the decayed temple. First forsooth they can counterfaite profession of religion, and offer themselues to buyld with the true Church, yea and make boast of the antiquitie of their seru'ng of the Lord: when this their subtle shift will not serue them, then doe they discourage and trouble them in buylding. Afterwards they hire counsellors against them to hinder their deuice. Then in another kinges dayes they write letters of accusation against them, about the penning whereof, there are no small heades occupied, as *Rehum* the Chauncelor, *Shimsai* the scribe, and their companions, in the which they pretending for sooth especiall regard of the kinges honor, they accuse the guiltles Iewes to be a rebellious and wicked people, and that they haue of olde bene alwayes giuen vnto sedition, in so much as if the king suffer the citie and temple to be built he shal most surely lose his toll & custom &c. Further in the fift chapter is mencioned how *Tatnai* the captaine beyond the riuer, and *Sether-boznai*, and their companions gretly molested them in the work, taking their names, that they might send them vnto *Darius*, hereby to discourage and hinder them in the building. Much more we may find in *Nehemiah* of the

*No new practise
to haue the true
professors to be ac-
cused of notorious
offences before
Princes, but falsly
by the malicious
aduersaries.*

Ezra. 4. 3.

Ezra. 4. 4.

Ezra. 4. 9. &c.

*Christ.**Elias.**The Apostles.**Paul.*

mightie enemies which the poore children of God
 had to staye them from going forwardes with the
 Lordes busines, but alwayes amongst other their
 deuises against the Church, craftie lying, and mali-
 cious accusing of them of rebellion and disobedi-
 ence is neither the last, nor the least. Christ him-
 selfe was charged with this accusation. Achab bur-
 deneth Elias the Prophet, that it was he that troubled
 all Israell. The Apostles manie times are complai-
 ned of to the ciuill magistrates, to be troublers of ci-
 ties, and teachers of ordinances, the which it is not
 lawfull for the heathen to receiue. The high priest
 himselfe together with his complices, by their Ora-
 tour *Tertullus*, lay vnto Paul before the gouernour
Felix that he was a pestilent fellowe, and a moouer
 of sedition among all the Iewes, &c. If Paul do but
 once speake against *Diana* of the *Ephesians*, *Demetrius*
 the Silver smith, together with his crewe of shrine-
 makers, will by and by be on the iacke of him, fea-
 ring that he will woorke the decay, and be the vn-
 doing of their occupation. The professors & mar-
 tyrs of the primitive Church, were charged with the
 like crimes. So haue the godly of all times and ages
 beene serued. Wee neede not therefore maruaile,
 ifeuen in our dayes wee heare the like slaunders, and
 craftie leasings practised against the true and faith-
 full seruants of Iesus Christ, and his woorship and
 religion. For wee haue manie enemies abroade of
 malicious and ambitious Papistes. yea, and to ma-
 nie of them at home, together with a number of ig-
 norant ministers, and no small companie of others;
 that hauing giftes of edifying, either vse them not at
 all, or else to foulie abuse them for the mainte-
 nance of their estimation and gaine, all which when
 as their enormities and abuses are freely reprooued
 out of the worde of God by the minister of the zea-
 lous and godly preacher, they beare deadly spyte
 and hatred against the partie that for their amend-
 ment and discharge of his owne conscience, boldly
 layeth open their sinnes before them, and when as
 no other way will helpe them, then sye they vnto
 this

this shift of *Aman*, to charge them with singularities, precisenes, puritanisme, disobedience to Princes lawes and ordinances, rebellion against lawfull magistrates, thinking hereby so to aggravate their cause before the rulers, as that they may easily put them to silence. And in deede by this meanes in manie places they haue mightily pretailed, the verie name of these crimes being so odious, that it hath beene sufficient to preiudice the parties vpon whome they haue beene layde, and to condemne them without further tryall and examination, which is a thing greatly to be lamented; and shalbe (I trust) redressed by the graue and wise magistrates, both of the Church and common wealth, placed in highest authoritie vnder her maiestie. I speake nothing here in the maintenance of anie brain sicke *Brownist*, or peeuish and preposterously zealed *Puritane* (if there be any such) But onely my humble desire is, that the accusations by the enemies of the godly brought against them, may bee thoroughly looked into by such as it concerneth in both gouernementes as well Ecclesiasticall as temporall. For that to manie their false shifts and pestilent practises, may iustly cause the magistrate to doubt of their subtile and craftie dealings. But if *Mordecai* and the dispersed *Israelites* be guiltie of *Aman* his accusations, I plead no cause of their pardon, let them for mee haue their deservings.

Yet there is further in *Aman* to be obserued, how in his prosperitie and fauour with the King to worke the bane of the Church, and neckebreaker of the godly, in steede of disswading of him from this wicked and diuellish purpose, he findeth counsaillours ynough euen of friends and of his owne wife, to perswade and encourage him, in most despitefull manner to goe forward with the same, who when they see the estate and dignitie, and fauour which *Aman* hath with the King, to beginne to appeare and decay, and him like to come vnto confusio, it is so far off, that in this case they can bring him any help, or will shewe him any comfort at all, that euen

If the true Church of God be not guiltie of the accusations of her enemies, they are worthy of more seuerall punishments.

The miserable end
of Aman.

those that are most dearest vnto him, will rather minister vnto him matter of ytter dispaire without all hope of recouerie and leaue him vnto the halter and gallowes, as here his owne wife *Zeresh* can say vnto him, surely if *Mordecai* be of the seede of the *Iewes*, before whom thou hast begunne to fall, thou shalt not preuaile against him, but shalt surely fall before him. And so it immediatly came to passe. For *Aman* was commended by the king to be hanged on the selfe same gallowes which he had prepared for *Mardocheus*, his house also giuen to the Queene, which had aduentured to speake in the behoofe of her people the Church of God, which vpon her sute are set at libertie, with free leaue and authoritie giuen them from the king to turne vpon their enemies, the selfe same punishment, the which they ment with all rigour & extremitie to haue executed vpon them. Thus *Aman* aduanced by the king vnto the highest place in all the kingdome, his royall throne of maiestie only excepted, abusing his power to the ouerthrowe of true religion, and the embracers of the same, in his felicitie (as he counted it) and prosperitie hauing ynough to pricke him forward vnto that thing which of himselfe, he was too forward vnto, and from the which they ought rather, if they had beene in deede good counsaillours, to haue by all meanes dissuaded him, the kings good will beginning nowe to be abated towards him, and his owne honour growing to the wane, is quite and cleane forsaken of all his frindes, that fauned vpon him whilest the world smiled on him, and left by his wisemen and wise in the bottomles downfall of deepe dispaire appointed vnto a most vile and shamefull death, his house and goods being giuen vnto the godly Queene Ester, that did hazard her life for the good of the church, & his place and authoritie committed vt to poore *Mordecai* the *Iewe*, whose gilles bloe he thirsted to shed, and for the spite which he bare vt to him, sought also the slaughter of the whole Church, the which notwithstanding, God at such time delivereth, when as all hope of help was past in the iudgement and sight of

Dedicatorie.

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of man. Such hath likewise beene the ende of all o-
ther the persecutors and enemies of the Church of
God, though for a time they haue flourished in this
worlde. *Pharao* that archenemie of the poore *Israe-*
els in the land of *Aegypt*, after that he spent as it were
all his wites in deuising how to oppresse and keepe
vnder the people of the Lorde, who the more they
were persecuted, the more they encreased, being first
in sundrie and fearfull sort plagued by the hande of
God, is at length drowned both he and all his in the
red sea, the children of *Israel* escaping without any
danger. *Achitophel*, who gaue that most mischie-
uous counsell vnto *Absolon* against his owne father
King *Dauid*, and so consequently against the whole
Church guided & defended by him, seeing his coun-
sell to take none effect, getteth him home to his own
house, and hangerh himselfe. The rulers and gouer-
nours that maliciously accuse *Daniel* vnto *Darius* as a
breaker of the kings commaundement, and one that
nothing regardeth his royal decree, are at the length
(*Daniel* being deliuered) cast into the same denne of
Lyons into the which *Daniel* was shut before, & haue
their bones broken by them, before they come to the
ground of the denne. The Iewes, which so often
accuse Christ, and his Apostles of sedition, of strange
religion and newe doctrine, are in the end them-
selues as seditious and rebelles put to the sword and
slaughter by the Romane Emperours. But hereof
there is I thinke no nation that euer hath had more
notable experience, then this litle Iland of ours. For
whether you looke vnto our godly *Ester* her selfe, or
vnto the chiefe gouernours vnder her, I meane of
the comon wealth, or of the Church, or whether
you looke vnto her poore subiects, which then were
as the scattered and dispersed Iewes, the time is not
long since, nor theyeres manie, in which not onely
one, but diuerse *Anans* occupying the highest
roomes as well in the ciuil gouernement, as also in
the policie of the Church, accused both our godly
Ester her selfe, together with *Mordcai*, that is such
as vnto her then were most deere, and not onely so,

Pharao

Achitophel

The accusers of
Daniel

The Iewes

Read Acts and
monuments in the
life of Queene
Elizabeth.

but also the rest of the poore Iewes, I meane all such as were known to be the true followers of Iesus Christ, of as great crimes, as *Mardocheus* is here charged with, but falsly: the decree also published of their destruction, by force whereof many were taken away: yea, *Ester* her selfe being then vnder so strait warde and custodie, that none durst speake vnto *Abasuerus* for her deliuerie, or aduenture scarce so farre as to vndertake the deliuerie of a letter in her maiesties behoofe: yea, and more ouer whereas then these *Amans* were chiefest in fauour and credit, there wanted not friendes and counsellors, who when as by duetie they should haue diswaded from going forward with these harmefull practises against her maiestie, and the rest of the godly, did rather counsell first to strike at the roote, and then to lop the boughes and branches afterwarde. But see the gracious goodnes of our high God, and the most mercifull bountie of our louing father, it is not long, but these *Amans* in the Church and common wealth are some by naturall death dispatched out of this life, and the others left behinde by lawfull authoritie remooued their houses, their landes, their liuings, their places, offices, and authoritie giuen vnto *Ester*, of a captiue and prisoner, now a Queene, and chiefest ruler of the lande, who hath bestowed the same vpon *Mordecai* the godly Iewe, that is, wise, graue, learned and godly magistrates, in both estates, the which being thus aduanced, are, in regarde of the principall duetie which they owe vnto God in thankfulness for his great mercies towards them, wholly to apply themselues, as it is saide of godly *Mordecai* in the last Chapter of this historie, to procure the wealth of their people, and to speake peaceably vnto all their seede, namelv in a worde, to labour for the welfare of the Church and benefite of the people of God, the which grace God for his Christ vouchsafe vnto them all. For nowe is the time that the Almighty especially requireth this their seruice, the enemies of the Church and chiefly of her maiestie being so many and so mightie both
abroad

abroade and at home, who, as they (following that shrewde counsell noted before in cutting at the roote) haue beene and daily are hacking and hewing to fell downe this most high and royall tree, vnder the comfortable shade of whose most flourishing brannches, watered with the sweete dewe of Gods most mightie providence, all her true and faithfull subiects are greatly cheared and refreshed: so the same tree being deeply rooted, and also defended by the strong arme of our high and Almighty father, shall (as I both trust and praye) as it hath hitherto long and manie yeares, most prosperously continue, that happening and falling out vnto these hackers and hewers, (as it is in the common prouerbe) he that heweth hye, the chippes will fall in his eye, and that which more is, the same axe wherewith they hewewithall, hauing so rebounded from the strong bodie of this so noble and royall tree, that turning the edge with great force vppon the Cutters, with the same it hath cleane swept off their heads from their treacherous and rebellious shoulders, the which like ende, if they speedily repent not, tarrieth. I hope all such like conspiratours to be founde out hereafter, vnto her maiestie, and her faithfull subiectes, the true people and Church of God.

The example also of *Affuerus* the King is not to be ouerpasse without some consideration. For it yeldeth two principall lessons among the rest, chiefly concerning Kinges and great rulers, and then consequently, all great Magistrates and officers vnder them, the which are either to heare complaints and accusations brought vnto them, or to determine and make lawes, decrees, & ordinances, &c. The one of these lessons is not imitable nor to be followed: the other is both heede fully to be marked, & also care fully to be practised.

In the first, *Ahasuerus* (or, as hee is commonly called, *Affuerus*) is to bee blamed and found fault withall; for that hee admitteth of the false accusation of *Aner*, albe it that the chiefe person in

his realme, against the miserable Iewes the Church of God, without any trial or examination of the matter at all. For albeit, wit, wisdom & policie in great personages be giftes greatly to be accounted of, and well vsed and applyed, are to be had in an high regard, and especially to be esteemed of, yet considering the great imbecilitie, frailtie and weaknes of mans nature, and how easily we are carried away with the sway and violence of our owne corrupt affections, this wisdom and prudence is required in princes, that they search narrowly into the accusations that such as are about them shall bring before them against their loyall subiects and people. And about all things to suspect such complaints as shall come against the true Church of God, and earnest professors of his Gospel, by whomsoever & of how great countenance soeuer they may seeme to be preferred. For in this place through this great oversight and rashnes of the king vpon *Aman* his bare report beleeuing his treacherous charge against the Iewes, had not Gods mercie bene the greater, and as it were miraculously sent deliuerance, the whole Church through his subtil and lying deuise, had vterly perished and bene destroyed. For *Aman* is not to learne how to lay downe his platforme, and to contriue his inuentions against the Iewes, labouring to make the same vile in the iudgement of the king, and to instill vnto his eares that they are of a small regard, certaine odd-fellowes, such as hold strange opinions, and are factious, maintaining a religion contrarie vnto his lawes, the which being trusted vp, there shoulde come no great losse vnto his kingdom, nay by whose deathes he should be greatly enriched. Such is the state of the poore Church, and the lamentable condition of the zealous professors, that they haue alwayes of the wicked enemies bene most vily accounted of, yea, euen as the offscourings and scrapings of the earth, as Saint Paul somewhere speaketh of himselfe. And wee reade euerie where in histories that for the bringing in of them into the greater hatred with great Princes, they haue bene nick-

nicknamed as it were, with all the most spitefull and reprochfull termes that the pestilent policie of the wilie wit of man hath beene able to inuent, as being termed *Valdenser*, poore men of *Lyons*, *Arnaldists*, *Tossépines*, *Hugonotes*, beggars, rascals, vnlearned, accursed, and what not. For this hath beene an olde subtiltie proceeding first from the Scribes and Pharises, who accounted of the poore people that followed Christ, as of rascals, ignorant, vnlearned, and accursed. The case then so standing with the poore Christians, that they lye open vnto the iniuries and false accusations of not only weake, but also strong and mightie enemies (as hath beene likewise touched somewhat before) It becometh the great Monarches and potentates of the worlde, together with all such as are gouernours vnder them in iudiciall causes (out of *Assuerus* his giuing too quick credit vnto the accusation of *Aman*) to learne this one point of wisdom, namely, not to receiue his complaints against the scattered and dispersed Iewes without due prooffe and examination, albeit he neuer so much abate them, to bring them vnto contempt & hatred: or shewe neuer so great like lihood of maruailous riches, that by this meanes might come into their cofers. For wealth and treasures gotten with the bloud of the Church (besides that they daily call for vengeance) are also to the dishonour and infamie of those that in such sort get them. Whereof Kings, Emperours and rulers ought heedefully to beware, that they practise nothing, that might be to the impairing of the honour of God; for he will not suffer it vntreunged.

The second thing, as it is a verie rare matter, and most strange example in a King, so is it likewise of kings first, and then also of all others when occasion serueth, diligently and willingly to be imitated and followed. For albeit at the first, the King and *Aman* sit banqueting, drinking, and making merie in the great sorrowe and heauines of the Church, in the teares and lamentation of the captiue Iewes appointed to the slaughter, being as it seemeth, rou-

*Danans in Aug.
de heresis. 105.
Iohn. 7. 46.*

*A rare example
in an heathen
King.*

shed with no remorse at all, for the causelesse shedding of such great plenty of innocent and guiltlesse blood, both of men, women, and little children, poore sucking babes and infantes hanging at their mothers brestes, perswaded (as hath bene noted before) by *Anus*, that they were a sect of small accounts to be made of, factious, and singular in their opinions, and religion, such as being put to the sworde, his empire was like to liue in more peace, and quiet: yet when as he is once informed by godly Ester what they are, and how villanously and dispitefully they are wrought against by that most wicked *Anus* the aduersary and enemy (as shee termeth him) hurtfull and vnprofitable vnto the king, howsoeuer he coulde put into his head, that their death shoulde greatly enriche his cofers: hee forthwith entred into a further and deeper consideration of the matter, sory no doubt that so lightly vpon their enemies accusation beleued without prooffe or examination he had sealed the decree of their death with his ring, the which makinge the same not able to bee vndone or called backe againe, notwithstanding by another decree hee is very carefull to provide for theyr safety and deliuerance, geuing them full leaue and power, euery man at the day appoynted to stande for his life, and to bee reuenged vpon his enemy. Which fact no doubt proceeded from an humble & a modest minde, duely weighing and considering the nature and condition of man, namely that it is not so perfect, but that it may erre and be deceiued, and therefore hauing runne into a very great ouersight, is presently ready vpon better aduice to seeke their wealth & welfare, whose death and massacre he had before sealed with his royall signet, nothing weighing his owne credite, dignity and estimation, the which of some woulde be thought likely this way to bee impeached, if hee shoulde seeme to yelde himselfe in some fault, but thinking it much better by a seconde aduice and consultation to procure their good, then

In mainetayning of his former ouersight, suffer the Church of God guiltlesly to pearish and be destroyed.

This truely in an heathen king, and such a one as then was the mighty monarch of the worlde, is a pointe that deserueth very high and singular commendation, and teacheth all such as sit in the throne of maiestie, and are exalted vnto the gouernement of peoples and nations, to remember that they are but men, and therfore may erre as men, both in their own particular actions of priuate conuersation concerning themselves, yea and sometimes also, in matters of gouernemente and publishinge of lawes and statutes, whiche if at any tyme it shall fall out, *Assuerus* is here their President, that it is better to alter or mitigate an ill decree against the church and people of God, then for credite or estimation sake to maynetaine and defend it: And the readines of him vpon the sute of Estee contrary to his former graunt and edict, to worke the benefite of God his people, may learne all such as are in neere places about Princes, that if a king of a contrary religion being sued vnto in time and place conuenient is so willing to procure the liberty of the pore Iewes, they also may bee in good hope to espie out some such time in suing vnto christian kinges & princes, as may in best sort profite and further the church and people of God in all thinges concerninge the aduancement of his glory, & furtherance of his gospell. And let vs not thinke that thys doctrine concerneth onely kings & great rulers, but that it is also necessary for euery member of the church: in so muche as not onely they which are to gouerne with the sworde, but those also that haue to instruct by the word, may make their greate profite by the same. For hereofin deepe hath come much hurt vnto the Church, when as such as being indued with principall and excellent giftes in the same, haue set downe either by woord or writinge some things not agreable vnto the scriptures of God, neither yet able to abide the touch of hys trueth: yet notwithstandinge, because they haue bene men of

some

Ionas.

Some note in respect either of learning, or calling, or some other graces, they will still stande to maintaine and defende the same, because they haue once either taught or set it downe in writing, least if they should neuer so little relent, they might be thought not stayed nor settled in their opinions, which is a thing as in all other cases verie hurtfull so truely in Church matters most daungerous and pernicious. But if there be anie so simple, as to thinke that the regarde of a mans credite and estimation may not carrie him cleane beyond the compas of obedience and duetie vnto God, though otherwise a verie godlie and singular man, let him in steede of many that might be alleaged, set before his eyes onely *Ionas*, a singular and most worthie prophet of the Lorde, by whose ministerie also God had wrought verie excellent and verie wonderfull thinges. This man notwithstanding, hauing once preached that *Ninive* within fourtie dayes should be destroyed, because he seeth God full of patience, mercie, and long suffering, not readie as he had spoken, & also looked for, to sende downe vengeance vpon them, fearing least hereby he might be counted a false and lying prophet, is so carried away with an immoderat desire of lauing his owne credit, that he had rather haue *Ninive*, in which were fixscore thousand young infants, besides an infinite number of other inhabitants, utterly to perish and be destroyed, then that his name and estimation should at any hande be touched and empai red. So great a force hath the regarde of sauing our countenance and authoritie among men, that wher God withholdeth not, it is able to carrie vs away headlong to be more carefull of the vpholding of our owne honour, then earnest for the maintaining of the glorie and honour of God. Let vs therefore whosoever we are, and of how excellent giftes soeuer, not be ashamed to learne of *Assuerus* to be humble and lowly minded, and alwayes to giue this glorie vnto God alone, to be vnchangeable, & subiect vnto no error, and to thinke of our selues that we both haue erred, and also may erre, and that therefore

fore whensoever wee shal be inſourmed by *Eſter*, I meane by any, whome God hath enlightened with a more cleare brightnes of his graces then we, that we be out of the way, we may be content with *Aſſuerus* to reuerſe our ſentence; and alter our determinations, and theſe ſo much the rather, as being Chriſtians, we ought to yeelde vp our counſailes, ſayings, actes, ordinances, and doings, vnto the better diſpoſition of his holie worde, if at any time like men in worde or writing wee haue ſwarued and gone aſide out of the way from the ſame.

Nowe as *Aſſuerus* hath taught vs not to belight of credit in receiuing of complaints and accuſations againſt the Church & children of God, or if through the imperfection that alwayes waiteth and hangeth vpon mans corrupt nature, we ſhall haue boene taken with this infirmitie, and by the violent ſtreame of the ſame, drawne aſide to the doing of any thing that might preiudice the Church, we ſhould be inſtructed by a better conſideration to reuoke the ſame: ſo the example of godly *Mordecai* may teach vs vnto a Chriſtian boldnes and conſtancie in troubles and afflictions, caſting all our care vpon the Lorde who hath promiſed to be carefull for vs, calling firſt of al vpon God by earneſt prayer, and humbling our ſelues by true repentance and faſting, before him, knowing & aſſuring our ſelues, that as he hath the hearts of men in his hand, ſo he can diſpoſe and turne them as ſeemeth beſt vnto his holie wiſedome, and then ſecondly to uſe all lawfull and ordinarie meanes of procuring the deliuerie of either our ſelues or others, whether it be by opening the matter vnto *Eſter*, that ſhee may ſue vnto the king for the good and benefite of his people and countrey men, or by any other way auſwerable and agreeable vnto the worde of God. And when as God ſhall haue ſent vs deliuerance we muſt learne of good *Mardocheus* to be thankfull vnto his maieſtie for the ſame, ſeeking at all aſſayes the wealth and preferment of our brethren the children of God all the dayes of our life, accordingly as wee may ſtande them in ſteede, either in regarde of the

What is to be
learned of the
doing of *Mardocheus*.

dignities

dignitie which we beare in the Church, or in respect
 of the authoritie which we carrie in the comō welth,
 And mine assured good hope and trust is, that the
 more plaine and open laying out of this doctrin with
 many others in this discourse, shall by the working of
 Gods holie spirite, take such effect not onely in your
 honour, and manie mo noble counsaillours and men
 of great places and calling about her most royall and
 godly maiestie, being zealous for the glorie of God,
 and the furthertance of his Gospell, but also among
 the graue and learned bishops the fathers of the
 Church, that it shall kindle a further flame and bur-
 ning desire to do good vnto Sion, and to seeke the
 peace of Ierusalem in so much, that all papistes, A-
 theists, hypocrites, timeseruers, turnecotes, weath-
 cockes, lewde and wicked persons, being by a Chri-
 stian, prudent, and godly witedome, seuered from
 the rest, as it were, the goates from the sheepe, and
 the chaff from the corne, or the golde and siluer from
 the drosse, and godly professours and true Christians,
 that is, such as are sounde and pure in religion, hol-
 ding no strange or newe opinions contrarie vnto his
 worde, and framing their life and conuersation ac-
 cording to the same, may be defended and cherished,
 maintained and vpholden against the craftie deuises
 and false accusations of all their manie and subtil
 enemies. For these are they in deede, which bearing
 vpright heartes vnto God, will euen for conscience
 sake at all assaues and aduentures shewe themselves
 loyall and faithfull vnto her maiestie, venturing both
 life and limmes (as they say) for her preservation,
 vnder whose gracious guidance by the prouidence
 of God & *spiramus & speramus*, wee do both breath,
 and hope for the long prosperitie of her highnesse,
 when as these other, if their golden day (as they
 terme it) woulde once come, in looking for the which
 with greedines, their owne eyes shall I trust first
 start out of their heads, will change & alter with the
 time, as being vtterly faithles towards God, and
 therefore, not likely to keepe touche or fidelitie to-
 wardes her maiestie their gracious Queene and liege

Soueraigne.

The poore Iewes by the subtiltie and craft of *M-* *Lessons to be learned from the behaviour and demeanour of the Iewes appointed unto the slaughter.*
 were brought into the displeasure of the King, and the decree irrevocable passed against them, committing their liues vnto the slaughter, and their goods vnto the praye of their enemies, they in the meane season, neither tumultuously nor seditiously, either by open force banding themselves together against the king, that graunted out this cruell edict against them, or against *Aman* that maliciously and falsly had accused them, nor yet by priuie treasons seeking to dispatch them out of the way, no nor so much as in worde or writing, once complaining of any vniustice towards them, albeit they were in deede most wrongfully and vniustly condemned, are a patterne of patience, and a mirrour of meekenes, yea, and a president of due full obedience vnto magistrates and rulers though neuer so wicked, meete & necessarie of all true Christians to be expressed & followed. And in verie deede this obedience and subiection vnto magistrates in all things not disagreeable vnto the worde of God, hath bene, and is one good note for to discerne the true Church and professors of Christian religion, from all false and antichristian churches & embracers of false and strange religion, and amongst them as the chiefest and most pestilent head, the Romish church, & all the maintainers and defenders of the same superstition and wilworship. For the true Church hath learned of Christ her head and master, to giue vnto *Cesar* the thinges that belong vnto *Cesar*, and vnto God the thinges that appertaine vnto God, in so much that with all mildnes and humilitie, it will rather lay downe her necke vnder the axe of the magistrate, then by any forcible meanes make semblance of resistance: if that the case shoulde so stande, that the gouernours woulde commaund her any thing contrarie vnto the worde of the Lorde, or falsely and wrongfully condemne her vnto the death and spoyle, vppon wrong information admitted without prooffe, as in this place it fareth with the captiue *Israhelites*.

Obedience in all things agreeable vnto the worde, a properie of the true Church.

Secondly,

Secondly, their patient and quiet submitting themselves to abide such punishment as was unjustly appointed vnto them, their wiues and little children, without any rebelling, working treason, murmuring, grudging or euil speaking, condemneth all Romish and Remish Iesuits, or rather Iebusites, all seditious seedemen and Seminarie priestes, all hollow harted traiterous Papistes, which for the vpholding of their monster or master (as they call him) the Pope & his antichristian kingdome, haue sundrie times heretofore, & now lately verie often practised most strange and vnnaturall treasons against her highnes owne most sacred maiestie and royal person, procuring excommunications against her and her people, soliciting them thereby to rebell, and discharging them from all loyaltie and obedience: for which their villanous and treacherous practises, when as some fewe of them haue beene most iustly executed, their complices left behind a liue, and secretly lurking about in corners, haue not ceased slaunderously, maliciously, and falsely by infamous and shamefull libels published in sundrie languages to geue out to the dishonouring of her maiestie and the estate, that they haue beene iudged and condemned for their conscience, and religion, whereas in deede it was for high treason intended against her owne person, and others her most loyall subiects, they themselves in the reigne of Queene Marie counting it no matter at all to put to death so manie men, women, and children, onely for the sincere profession of the religion of Iesus Christ. These Iewes therefore in captiuitie vnder a strange and heathen king, a worshipper of idols and false gods falsely acculed, and wrongfully condemned, yet with all patience & humilitie abiding the same, shall rise at the day of iudgement against these traitours, who in the libertie of the Gospel, in their own countrey, against their owne most godly Queene practising such vheard of and wonderfull treasons, and vpon sufficient and manifest prooffe lawfully condemned and executed for the same, haue both stubbornely and rebelliously died, and being dead, haue

if their treacherous confederates left behinde them aliue, which cease not by indirect and most reprochful meanes to colour their deserued sufferings vnder the deceitfull cloake of vnderdeserued punishment for their conscience, & defence of the Catholike religion, all the world notwithstanding seeing, & being able to testifie, that Papists eueriewhere, if they can keepe their itching fingers from attempting treasons, are permitted but too much libertie, & such, as in many places tendeth vnto the hurt & corrupting of many poore & simple ignorant people, a thing needefull the due and timely consideration.

The third & last thing which I note in this people of the Iewes bewrapped in so many miseries & calamities, as out of which in the eye of man there was no way to escape, is their marueilous & in a maner miraculous deliuerance contrarie vnto all expectation of flesh & bloud, their sorrow being turned into solace, their mourning into mirth, their heauines into gladnes, their darknes into light, & their death into life, By this we are admonished not to faint nor to be dismayed in troubles & afflictions, knowing that he that keepeth Israel doth neither slumber nor sleepe, and that those which hurt his Church, do touch as it were the apple of his eye, ouer whom he is more mindful & careful than the mother of the child of her own brest, and most like a mightie God useth then sonest to help & deliuer, when as all help & deliuerance seemeth to be furthest off, yea, & past all hope in the iudgement of man. So he deliuered the children of Israel out of Egypt, at such time when as the trouble and affliction was at the greatest, wherwith the tyrant Pharaos oppressed them & kept them vnder. So he saued them at the red sea, their enemies following hard behinde them with sword & weapon to destroy them, the red sea before them to swallow them in & drowne them, the mountaines on both sides inclosing them in as a mightie wall, ouer which there was no passage, and now no other likelihood, but that they must needes be geuen into the hands of their enemies, as sheepe

*The marueilous
deliuerance of
the Iewes.*

Senacherib.

Into the mouth & iawes of the Lyon to deuour them; yet in this present daunger the mightie hande of the Lord maketh a way for their deliuerance to the vtter subuersion and confusion of their aduersaries. *Senacherib* by his blasphemous embassadours despising as it were the high God himselfe, and threatening such straite besiege, ment vnto the people of Ierusalem, that by vehemencie of the same they should be driuen to eat their owne dung, and to drinke their owne water, hath in one night fourscore and fise thousande of his men slaine by the Angel of the Lorde, and *Senacherib* himself afterwards murdered by his own sonnes, as he was worshipping in the temple of *Nisroch* his God. It were infinite to rehearte the great plentie of examples which the Scriptures of God may furnish vs with in this behalfe, but these may suffice to teach vs, that God both can & will deliuer his at such time as vnto his holic wisdom shalbe thought most conuenient, albeit there be no likelihood thereof vnto the sight of man. And who are better witnesses hereof, then euen we our owne selues, who in the late dayes of poperie and superstition sawe nothing but fire, sworde and halter euery day prepared against the true Saints of God, and innocent lambes of Christ Iesus, our gracious soueraine her self looking for no other then to haue tasted of the same sauce, and therefore with all humilitie knowing her Innocencie and guiltlesnes left in manie places testimonies of the same by engrauing of her noble posse in manie windowes of her imprisonment *sanguinis*, and yet in the ende God sendeth helpe, man could looke for none at all, deliuering vs, and placing her in the high throne of maiestie, where he graunt her long and many yeares to continue to the furtherance of his glorie, and benefite & welfare of his Church.

Thus we see the readines, willingnes, & ablenes of our good God, in causes and cases most desperate of his Church, to saue, deliuer, and defend the same, whē as all meanes of succour and reliefe may seeme vnto our dim sight to be farthest off. Let vs not therefore
bee

Dedicatorie.

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See like vnto the woman of Samaria talking with Christ, who because she knoweth the well to be deep, and seeth Christ without a bucket, thinketh by & by, that he can help her to no water. That is, let vs not at any time tye god vnto the meanes, or think no higher of him than the corrupt eyes of our weake flesh will suffer vs to see into, but let vs rather perswade and assure our selues that if it be for Gods glorie, and expedient for vs, the Lorde will surely sende vs deliuerance, if not bodily, (for that is not alwayes to be looked for) yet spirituall and heauenly, ministring vnto vs comfort and constancie in all afflictions for his name sake, cherefully & boldly to bear out the same.

You haue heard (right honorable) some of those comfortable and profitable doctrines, which the circumstances of this short historie do yeld to vs plaine-ly and simply in some measure layde out, according vnto the small talent which God in great mercy hath blessed me a poore sinful creature with all, the plentifulnes whereof hath carried me farre beyond my first purpose at the beginning, and caused me to be somewhat longer then the ordinarie compas of a preface may well beare, in which regarde I am with all reuerent lowlines to craue your most honorable & gentle pardon, humbly beleeching the Almighty, who only knoweth, that neither vaine glorie, nor hatred, nor enuie, nor malice, nor any sinister affection or purpose particularly to gaule any person whatsoeuer, but a longing desire to stirre vp the godly whome any way by place credit, authority or countenance it may concerne, daily more and more to seeke and trauaile for the welfare of the Church, and benefit of Gods people, & to terrifie the wicked, to abuse their power and dignitie to the hinderance of the Gospel, or the true followers of the same, hath moued mee to set downe the vse of these doctrines at large, so he would in great mercie vouchsafe euery day more and more to worke this notable effect, not onely in your godly honour, but also in all others that are in place and authoritie from her maiestie, either in the Church or

The Epistle

common wealth, knowing this to be their greatest
honour, glorie and comfort, to haue procured the
prosperitie of Sion, and the peace and welfare
of Ierusalem. From Tunbridge, this
25. of Ianuary. 1583.

Your honours most humble in the Lord
I. Stockwood, Scholemaster
of Tunbridge.



Ad

An admonition vnto the gentle Christian Reader.

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Am not ignorant (gentle Reader) nei-
ther of the antiquitie of Polygamy, or
hauiug many wiues at one time, nor of
the diuersitie of opinions concerning the
same, some maintaining it simply to be
lawfull in all persons, others thinking
it in the fathers and godly Patriarkes
of the first times not to be sinne, because God winked at and
bare with the same, of the which iudgement are many of the
olde writers, together with the authour of this discourse. And
some there haue bene like wise of our time of great reading
and learning, that haue left the matter in doubt, neither affir-
ming the one nor the other, in the case of the fathers. All this
notwithstanding, I holde their iudgement most soveraine, who
thinke the fathers in this point to be condemned, and to haue
sinned, and that this their fact is no more to be followed, than
manie other their actions, in which wee knowe them to haue
gone aside from the worde of the Lorde. Wee read how God
in the beginning appointed that two should be one flesh, and
therefore gave vnto Adam not manie, but one wife. And so
Paul to the Corinthians in plaine wordes commandeth, say-
ing, let euery man haue his owne wife, &c. Malachie, the
Prophet teaching vs, that God the most wisest in the creation
ordained the same. As for such as take vpon them to de-
fend simply the hauiug of many wiues (such a one as in our
time was that filthie beast and shamelesse Apostata & backe-
slider Bernardine Ochin!) Wee leaue them vnto the iust
iudgement of God, who will in his due time be reuenged on all
such frantike persons, as dare open their blasphemous mouths
against heauen. Concerning the fathers, wee thinke reue-
reently of them, and albeit there be manie things that may
be alleaged for the lessening of their fault, yet dare we not af-
firme that by taking many wiues they committed no fault at
all, in as much as in thus doing they did violate and breake
the first institution, as hath bene saide before. And thus

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much I thought good in a word to touch, upon occasion that
 Brentius the author of this discourse seemeth to allowe of
 the doings of the fathers in this behalfe, requesting thee
 (gentle Reader) in all writings of all men whatsoever,
 not to stay upon the iudgement of the man,
 but to rest and ground thy selfe upon
 the infallible warrant of
 the word of God.

Thy poore brother in Christ
 Iohn Stockwood.



OUT

Out of Suidas, in the word

Aman, in which place *Assu-*
erns is called *Darius*.



M A N, ruler ouer the
affaires of *Darius*, pro-
mised that he woulde
bring into the Kings
Exchequer ten thou-
sand talents, if he would destroy the
Iewes. And after that he had per-
suaded this vnto the King, com-
mandement was giuen vnto the na-
tions, to destroy all the Iewes vpon
one day. But before these thinges
were accomplished, *Mardocheus* ope-
ned vnto the King by *Ester*, treason
conspired against him. Therefore
the King called backe the former
decree, and hung *Aman* on the gal-
lowes, who ment to haue hanged
Mardocheus. And manie of their eni-
mies were slain by the Iewes. Wher-
upon also the Iewes do keepe those
dayes holic.

The argument or contents of this booke of Ester.

The contents
of this booke.

FOrasmuch as our Elders, who
haue deliuered vnto vs from
hand to hand (as they say) the
lawfull, and, as they call them,
the Canonickall bookes of the holie
Scripture, haue put this booke of
Ester also in the number of them: I
will not thinke much to go ouer it
with a litle brieife exposition. For it
containeth a notable example of the
Church of God preserued in a most
perilous and daungerous time, and
rehearseth with how great seueritie
and sharpnes G O D deliuereth his
Church out of the handes of his ad-
uersaries and enemies. It teacheth
moreouer, that God doth mercifully
lift vp the base and in miserie, and
mightily throw downe the proud &
high minded. Wherefore this booke
is profitable to teache faith & the
feare

feare of God, that the godly be not
 quailed in aduersitie & trouble, but
 calling on the name of the Lorde by
 faith, may conceiue assured hope of
 help, and that the wicked may be
 feared by the punishment of others,
 and turne vnto godlines.

The profite of
 this booke.

Now, there are some, which say,
 that this booke was written by Ioia-
 chim the sonne of Iesus, who after
 the Iewes returned from the capti-
 uitie of Babylon was high Priest in
 Ierusalem. Others thinke it to be
 written by Mardocheus, who is a
 great part of the storie which is set
 out in this treatise. But howsoeuer it
 go concerning the writer, doubtles
 our Elders, in that by their autho-
 ritie they haue commended vnto vs
 this worke, they do also beare wit-
 nes, that the things which are ther-
 in comprized, are not playes of a
Comædie or Tragædie, but a thing

Diuerse opin-
 ons of the au-
 thor of this
 booke.

The Argument.

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done in deede.

Doubtes concerning the time, in the which this was done.

Concerning the time wherein it was done, I see there be manie that do doubt. And yet if a man do with diligence lay together the course of the storie, there is in a manner no darknes left in this behalfe. For when as the booke sayeth, that Asuerus the most mightie king of the Persians marryed Ester to wife, it is manifest & plaine, that these things were done in the Monarchie of the Persians, after that the Iewes returned vnto their countrey Ierusalem from the captiuitie of Babylon, by the graunt of Cyrus, for albeit Cyrus, hauing ouercome Balthasar the King of Babylon, gaue leaue vnto the Iewes to retorne vnto their owne land, and to build up the temple, as the booke of Esdras in the first Chapter doth witnes, yet the greatest part of the Iewes tarried behind

in

in those countreys, into the which they were dispersed and scattered, some for one cause and some for another. Some of ungodlines, for that as the scripture speaketh, they set at naught the land that was to be desired, and had rather among the wicked Gentiles adventure the perill of falling into idolatrie, than at home among the people of God, to followe the true worship of the true God. Others by reason of their owne priuate necessitie, for that their estate was so bare among the Heathen, that they could not conueniently return vnto the countrey of their forefathers. Some were stayed through publike necessitie, to attend in the courtes of the Persian kings, not only for the benefit of the Iewes which stayed behinde among the Gentiles, but also of them which were gone to repaire the temple and
the

Manie of the Iewes after the returne of their fellowes, taried behind, some for one cause, and some for another.

the citie Ierusalem, in the number of
whome were Daniel, Esdras, and
Neemias. That therefore which is
here set downe in this booke to haue
fallen out to the Iewes, the same is to
be iudged to haue come to passe vnto
those Iewes, which did not retorne
with the rest from the captiuitie of
Babylon vnto Ierusalem, but
which remained among the
Gentiles, in the king-
dom of Persia.

Chap.

AN EXPOSITION
vpon the Booke of Ester.

The first Chapter.



N the daies of Assuerus, &c.] Chap. 1. verse. 1.
First wee haue
to search, who
this Assuerus
was, of whom
mentio is made
heere, & who af-
terwards mar-

Assuerus, who
he was.

ried to wife Ester the Jewesse : for al-
beit the booke of Esdras the fourth chap-
ter maketh mention of Assuerus, and
that in the mienth chapter of Daniell,
Darius is called the sonne of Assuerus,
yet is it not plainely in the scriptures
set downe, who amongst the Kinges of
the Persians was called by this name.
Wherefore this is to be sought out a-
mongst other writers. And to the end
that not so much the time of the story of
Ester, as the course of thinges done,
which are set forth in Esdras, Nehemi-

as, and Daniell, may be the better vnderstood, I will set downe a note of the Kinges of Persia, in such sort as the workes of writers haue deliuered them vnto vs.

After that Babylon was taken, and Balthasar the last King of the Babylonians slaine, and the Monarchy of Babylon translated vnto the Persians: the first Monarches of the Persians were, Cyrus King of the Persians, and Darius the sonne of Astyages, King of the Medes. For these ioyning their powers together, tooke Babylon. Of this Darius, is mention made in Daniel the fift and sixt Chapters. And this is the same Darius, who suffered in dede that Daniell should be cast into the denne of Lions, and when he sawe that Daniell was unhurt of the Lions, he confessed & set forth the glory of the true God of Israell, by a publike decree and proclamation.

Cyrus.
Darius,

Cyrus reigneth
alone after the
death of Darius.

Afterwards when Darius was dead, Cyrus reigned alone in the kingdom of Persia, who both gaue leaue vnto the Jewes to returne vnto Ierusalem, and also to repaire the temple & citie as it is writ,

the Booke of Ester.

writte in the 1. chap. of Esdras. Of this Cyrus prophesied Esaias chap. 45. And there is mention made of him in Daniell, chap. 10. Cyrus being gone to war against the Scythians, Cambyfes his sonne a most cruell tyrant, reigneth in the meane season. Of this there is no mentio made in the holy scriptures, albeit Iosephus be of the minde, that the building of the temple in Jerusalem, granted before by Cyrus, was forbidden by him. But it is more likely to be true, that it was forbidden at the beginning more by the wickednes of rulers dwelling neere by, then through the commandment of Cambyfes. But after the death of Cyrus, Cambyfes being gone to war against Egypt, & there slaine, the Magi, or wise men tooke vpon them the kingdom of the Persians. Of which matter see Herodotus in Thaleia. But of these also there is not any mention made in the holy scriptures, because they had nothing to doe with the Jewes, & reigned but only seuen moneths.

Cambyfes.

Magi, or wise men.

After the wise men or Magi were slaine, Darius the sonne of Hytaspes, was chosen king by the reying of an horse. Of which election, Herodotus in

Darius the sonne of Hytaspes.

4 An Exposition vpon

Thaleia, writeth very pleasant things. This Darius Metasthenes calleth, Priscus Artaxerxes Assuerus. And the verie order of times, and course of the Persians Monarches and kings doe shewe that this Darius the sonne of Hystaspes is that same Assuerus, of whome the Booke of Ester entreateth, and which married Ester to wife. For in Daniell the nienth chapter, Assuerus is called the father of Darius, not of him that was chosen king by the neyng of an horse, but of him that was surnamed Longhand, who granted vnto the Iewes, to repaire the worke of the Temple which was left of, of whom we will speake afterward. For as much therefore as the thinges which are written in this booke of Ester, were done vnder Assuerus, which was the father of Longhand, it is plain that they were done before the repairing of the Temple. Now betweene the first yeare of the Monarchy & kingdome of Cyrus, in the which the Iewes were forbidden the building of the temple, and betweene the repairing of the temple, that is, vnto the first yeare of Darius Longhand, there were 46. yeares,

yeares, as the Iewes doe witnesse in John, chapter. 2. Now, when Darius the Mede was dead, Cyrus reigned yet 22. yeares, amongst the which are contained the seven yeares also which Herodotus saith that Cambyfes y^e sonne of Cyrus reigned. For Cyrus was six yeares in the Scythian warres, in the which Cambyfes reigned in the meane while at home: but because Cyrus was yet aliue, they are ascribed by some vnto Cyrus and not vnto Cambyfes, who making warre against the Egyptians, liued not long after the death of his father.

After Cyrus, Metasthenes ouerpassing Cambyfes, putteth Artaxerxes Assuerus, and saith that he reigned 20. yeares. But Herodotus writeth, that after that Cambyfes was dead and the wise men slaine, Darius the sonne of Hystaspes was chosen King by the neyng of an horse. Wherefore when as those thinges, which are written in the booke of Ester, were done before the repairing of the temple, and after Cyrus, Cambyfes being dead, and the wise men slaine, reigned Darius the sonne of Hystaspes, those yeares

Metasthenes.

Herodotus.

in which the building of y^e temple was stayed, it is plaine, that this Darius is hee, whom Metasthenes calleth Assuerus. And Herodotus writeth, that Darius, if a man would interpret it, significth *εξ επι* that is to say, one that keepeth vnder his aduersaries, and Artaxerxes *μὲν ἀρχὴν*, that is, a great Warriour. These were the titles of the Princes & Kings of the Persians, like as the Egyptians called their Kings Pharaos, that is, Delinerers; and the Romans call their Emperors, Augullos, as if it were chosen by God.

What Darius
and Artaxerxes
doe signific.

The wiues of
Darius.

Further in Herodotus, the wiues of this Darius Assuerus are reckoned vp, one, Atossa, an other, Artystona, & besides these, others also. And albeit Artystona doe seeme to come nearer vnto the name of Ester, yet in this booke chap. 2. Ester is plainly called Adassa. For thus is it read according vnto y^e truth of the Hebrew: Mardocheus was the bringer vp of Adassa, (y^e same is Ester) y^e daughter of his brother. Forasmuch therefore as Ester is called Adassa, it appeareth that she is the same which Herodotus calleth Atossa. Herodotus in deede writeth, that Atossa was the daughter
of

Against Hero-
dotus and other
writers.

2
the Booke of Ester.

of Cyrus, and was married before vnto Cambyfes and the wise man: but if Adassa be all one with Atossa, as it appeareth, truely greater credite is to bee giuen vnto our holie scriptures, which do say that Adassa or Atossa, the which is Ester, was a Jewe, and being a virgin was married of Assuerus, then vnto other writers, which make her the daughter of Cyrus. What if Darius, or Assuerus had not only one, but more wives called by the same name of Atossa, of the which Herodotus maketh mention but of one onely? What if hee being a Greeke writer, had rather feine Atossa to be the daughter of Cyrus, and the wife of the former Kinges, that with this lye he might somewhat commend the royall family of Darius, then write the truth of Atossa a Jew, and borne of Captiues to her auncestors, least so noble an house should be defiled as it were with such a blotte? But because these thinges are farre not so much from our memory, as from our time and age, and that we must vse the testimonies of ancient writers, let euerie man followe y, which seemeth vnto him in writers to

A necessarie rule to be kept in reading of prophane histories.

● An Exposition vpon

be likeliest to be true, & which doth most agree with the holie scriptures. For that which is flatly against the holie scriptures, must be holden for a vaine thing.

Xerxes.

After this Darius or Assuerus, Herodotus reckoneth by Xerxes y^e some as he saith, of Darius, by Atossa, which Xerxes waged that notable warre against Greece. But Metasthenes rehearseth Darius Artaxerxes, surnamed Longhand, because that his right hande was longer then his left. And some thinke that Xerxes was therefore ouerpassed by Metasthenes, because that Xerxes taking his voiage into Greece, Longhande gouerned the kingdome in the meane season. For by an olde ordinance of the Persians it was not lawfull for the kyng to goe vnto warre, vnlesse he did first appoint his successour, They say thus much moreouer, that the same Longhande was the sonne of Xerxes. Others doe iudge that this Darius Longhande was the sonne of Ester, by Assuerus. For Daniell doth call him the sonne of Assuerus, ca. 9. Doubtlesse this Darius

Artaxerxes.
Longhand.

is

is he which gaue leaue againe vnto the
Jewes, to repaire the temple and
the citie Jerusalem, the building wher
of was staide now from the tyme of Cy-
rus, and is he, from whose second yeare,
the seuenty weekes of Daniel are num-
bred, and of whom mention is made,
Esdr. cap. 4. 5. & 6, and in Nehem.
cap. 2. vnder the name of Artaxerxes.
Also Dan. 9. Agge, & Zachar. 1.

After this Darius Longhand they
number Darius Nothus, after whom
Artaxerxes Mnemon, surnamed the
great. Him foloweth Artaxerxes O-
chus. After whom is Arses, Then Da-
rius the last conquered by Alexander
the great. These were the monarches
and kinges of the Persians, whome I
thought good here to recite because that
the thinges which are set forth in the
booke of Ester were done in this mo-
narch of Persia, and to the end that ha-
uing rekened vpon the kinges of the Per-
sians, it might be more manifest, who
that Assuerus was, of whom is intrea-
ted in this booke, whom befoze we haue
shewed to bee called Darius Prescus
Artaxerxes, who also after the mur-
ther

Darius Nothus.

Artaxerxes
Mnemon.

1
An Exposition vpon

ther of the wise men, was chosen King by the neighing of an horse, which reigned from India vnto &c] from India vnto Ethiopia, that is from the East vnto the West. Herodotus in Thaleia doth at large set out the power of this Darius Assuerus, and the greatnesse of his Empire. And albeit Herodotus doth say that Darius, hauing gotten the Empire, did appoint onelye twentie Prineedommes which they called Douchies, when as the Scripture in this place affirmeth that hee raigned ouer an hundreth twentie and seuen Prouinces, yet by the numbring vp of the Douchies, which Herodotus doth reckon, it is manifest y^e every Douchi contained many Prouinces. Therefore we are to think, that when as Darius reigned ouer 127. Prouinces, that he disposed these Prouinces onely into 20 Douchies, that is governments or lordships, to the end that the tributes of euery prouince might be the more easily gathered. And Herodotus saith that Darius receiued out of these Lordships for tribute yearely 14. thousand, five hundreth & threescore talents of Enbo-
cia

Satrapeias.

The tributes of
Assuerus.

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Why God maketh one man ruler euer so many countries.

cia, which do amount vnto y^e summe of fourescore and fīue hundzeth thousand crownes of gold (as they call them) at y^e least. These thinges do plainely shew y^e greatnes & royalmes of the monarchi oꝝ kingdome of Persia. Let vs see therfoꝛe to what end God doth ordeine kingdomes, & put so many countries vnder the rule of one Prince, foꝛ kingdomes do not stand by chaunce, and at all aduentures, neither can one man without God atteine the gouernment of so many most diuerse nations. Wisedome, saith Daniel, & strength are of the Lord. He chaungeth times & ages, remoueth kingdomes, and ordeineth them. And againe, he that is on high hath rule ouer the kingdome of men, and giueth the same vnto whom he will. What is the that purpose of God whereby he remoueth kingdomes, and ordeineth them? You will say, that the good may be defended, and the euill punished, and that princes may be a feare vnto them that do ill, as Paule speaketh, and a praise vnto the good, to the end that publike honestie and quiet maye bee kept among men verie well. But vnto what

Why God preserueth kingdomes.

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what vse is publike honesty and quiet
to be kept: That we should follow our
bellies, & fullfill the desires of our minde
Nothing lesse. But that we may know
the Lord God, learne the true righte-
ousnes of God, and attaine euerlasting
saluation. Kingdomes therfore and
Empires are ordeyned by God for his
church, that the worde of God may be
taught in publike quiet, and continued
vnto our posteritie and those that come
after vs, and that the true knowledge
of God may be preserued among men.
Esai. as chapt. 45. doth prophesie of Cy-
rus the first Monarch of the Persian
Empire, and sayth: Thus sayth the
Lorde vnto Cyrus myne annoynted,
whome I haue taken by the righthand,
that I may make nations subiect before
his face, and turne the backes of kings,
and open gates before him, & the doores
shall not be shut. And by and by: I the
Lorde which call thy name the God of
Israell, for my seruant Iacob his sake,
and Israell mine elect and chosen. Here
the Prophet doth plainely teach, that
the Monarchie of Persia was ordeyned
by God for Israell his sake, that is, for
the

the Church of God. Now when as God hath geuē so great power vnto the first Monarch of the Persian Empyre, for his church sake, doubtlesse it is euident, that his posteritie also, in whose number thys Darius Assuerus is lykelwise conteined, of whome we now intreat, haue receiued so great Maiestie of Empire, for the Church sake. For albeit a great part of Princes doe not acknowledge the true God, neither thinke that they are placed in the gouernemente of Empire for the church of God, yet God is of such wisdom, that hee bleth the seruice both of the godly and vngodly Princes for the good of his church. For the persecution of wicked Princes, is an occasion, whereby the church is both tried & increased. The Scripture speaketh of the persecution of Pharao and of the Egyptians: Now much more they oppressed them, so much the more they multiplied and increased. In the Babylonicall destruction of the citie Ierusalem, the church of the Lord seemed vtterly to pearish, but the farther the Iewes were scattered among the Gentiles, the wider the Maiestie of the true God

An Exposition vpon

God was spread abroad, that which the
publike edictes of the kinges of Babilon
and Persia, which are written in Dani-
el, doe witnes. And the dueties of God-
ly Princes, wherewith they doe helpe
the Church, as they do much profit the
Church, so they bring vnto Princes al-
so their benefites. Wherefore the holie
Ghost exhorteth them, that they im-
brace true doctrine, & imploy their ser-
uice to further the church. Now I yee
kings, saith he, vnderstand, be ye lerned
ye that iudge y^e earth: serue the Lord in
feare, and reioise before him with trem-
bling. Kisse the son, least at any tyme the
Lord be angry, & ye perish from y^e right
way. And againe, lift vp your gates yee
princes, and be ye lift vp ye euerlasting
gates. For which the hebreue text hath:
lift ye vp your heads ye gates, and be ye
lifted vp ye gates of the world, and the
king of glory shall enter in, y^e is to say,
ye kingdomes & empires of this world,
set open your gates wide, that the king
of glory may enter in, giue place vnto
godly doctrine in your countries, that
the glory of the Lord may be set forth,
and the Church preserved. Which
thing

The office of
Princes.

thing if the holye Ghost require of the Princes and monarchies of this world, no doubt he requireth the same of euery priuate person, that euerie one bestowe his seruice according vnto his abilitie and calling, to set forth the glorie of God, and to preserve his Church. And the Church is preserved not with the building of gorgeous houses, or erecting and setting vp of orders of monkes, but by the true and sincere doctrine of the Gospell, to the preserving herof the studies of good letters are needful. Wherefore as well princes as priuate persons ought to set all their care heron, that both schooles of good learning, and ministeries of teaching the Gospell in the Church be rightly ordeined, for to this end Monarchies and common welthes were ordeined by God. But let vs returne vnto Darius Assuerus, who when as he him self had receiued so great maiestie of Empire for the Church, albeit he thought nothing lesse, and seemed also to be an enimie vnto the church, yet whilest he reigned the church receaued much profite, as this booke will witnes,

Schooles and
teachers of the
word.

2

Susa.

Susa the citie of his kingdome &c.]
 Susa, or as the Hebrewes call it Susan,
 is the chiefe citie in that part of Persia,
 which is called Susiana. Herodotus in
 Terpsichore sayth, that in thys citie
 was the kings court of Persians. This
 is (saith he) the land of Cissia, wherein
 beside the riuer Choaspis, is builded
 the citie Susa, where the great king doth
 dwell, and here are the treasures of his
 mony. He writeth also in an other place
 of the riuer Choaspis, that it runneth
 by Susa, & witnesseth that Cyrus was
 delighted with the drinke of this riuer
 onely, and that whithersoener he went,
 he carried with him in many cartes in
 vessels of siluer the water of this riuer
 sodden. In that he vsed vessels of siluer
 to carry water in, it is a token of the
 royaltie of a king. And it is a signe of
 great temperancie, that a king dronke
 water rather then wine, the which also
 he shewed by carrying it about, to this
 end, that by his example he might moue
 the people vnto temperancie also. But
 see what is the maner of this our time.
 Princes, and such as are called Nobles,
 are mightie, according to the Prophet,
 to

The River
 Choaspis.

The temperan-
 cy of Cyrus.

A contrary ex-
 ample of intem-
 perancy in many
 great men of
 our time.

2
the Booke of Ester.

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to drinke wine, and strong men to med-
dle drunkenness. Therefore it cometh
to passe that through their verie ex-
ample they fill the land with drinkings
and gurmandise. Therefore Cyrus shal
arise in iudgement with this generati-
on of Princes and Nobles, & condemne
it.

3

In the third yeare therefore of
his Empire, &c.] A description of set-
ting out of a publike feast, the which
Assuerus ordeined and prepared, for his
Princes, halfe a yeare, and for his Citi-
zens in Susa seven dayes, to declare his
royalnes, and by this meanes, to winne
vnto him the mindes of his people. For
albeit hee seemed to be chosen King by
God, because that his horse neyed first,
before the rising of the Sonne, whome
onely the Persians believed to bee God,
and vnto whom they did thinke horses,
to be dedicated, yet no doubt he had gree-
ued the mindes of his people, because in
his Empire he had ordeined such an ex-
action of tribute, as was neuer used be-
fore, neither vnder Cyrus nor Camby-
ses, and therefore he was commonly cal-
led *καπηλος* that is, a merchaunt, or
Ducster,

An Exposition vpon

Assuerus
of this roy-
-craft.

4 -

5

6

7

Duxter, because that he made more than
pise of all thinges. Therefore he made
a royall feast, both to winne the good li-
king of those, whome hee had offended
with this ordaining of tribute, and also
by the shewing of his royaltie & power
to afray the seditions and factions, that
they should not attempt any thing a-
gainst him. Now the furniture and pre-
paring of the feast was after this ma-
ner. All the wallis of the feast chamber
or banquet place were haged with most
costly hangings and Tapestry, the beds
or benches were of golde and siluer, the
pauement of marble of diuers colours.
The postes were of golde, and euery
sore chaunged. The wine was most
precious, and altogether becoming
the royallnesse of a king, and yet in so
gorgeous preparation, modestie and so-
brietie becoming, was kept. For the
king ordeined that no man should con-
straine or force other to drinke, but that
euery one should drinke what he thought
sufficient for him.

Now there is no neede at this time
to speake of this royaltie of Assuerus,
to wit, whether Assuerus did well, in
that hee made shewe of his wealth in so
sumptuous

sumptuous a feast? For what haue we
 to do saith Dauid, to iudge those which
 are without? And, vnto the vncleane
 and vnfaithfull, nothing is pure, but e-
 uen their minde and conscience is pol-
 luted. Yet doth not the holie Ghost
 without cause set forth these thinges to
 be read in the church. For first wealth
 and riches, which are counted necessary
 to shew forth magnificence and royal-
 tie, are the gift of God, where with
 the magistrate is to this end garnished
 by God, that though his royaltie he
 might be the more reuerenced of his sub-
 iectes, and feared of his enemies. Riches
 (saith the Lorde vnto Salomon) & hon-
 our and glory will I giue vnto thee,
 so that none among the Kinges either
 before thee or after thee, shall be like vnto
 thee. Wherefore, if a goodly Prince do
 meanelie vse his riches vnto royaltie, it
 is not any wicked lawlesse out of mo-
 ny, but a profitable strengthening of his
 kingdom. And altho royaltie be not
 condemned in Princes being vied mo-
 derately, yet it is not lawfull to poll the
 people, that thou maiest ruffle in royal-
 tie: and it is of all other the most ex-
 ce-

Royaltie of
 wealth and o-
 ther sumptuous-
 nes in Princes
 and magistrates,
 is not simply to
 be condemned.

to be so
 -shines ad
 -law and
 -and the

lent kinde of roynalnesse, to haue care for
the poore and needie. For it is a thing
needfull that the poore be holpen: but
that thou shouldest make shew of thy ri-
ches in sumptuous buildings or feastes,
is not necessary. When thou makest
a dinner, saith Christ, or a supper, byd
not thy friendes, nor thy brethren, nor
thy kinsfolke, nor rich neighbours, leaue
they at any time byd thee againe, & thy
good turne bee paide thee againe: nay
when thou makest a feast, bid the poore,
the weake, &c. Againe, in the roynalnesse
of Princes the wonderfull and infinite
maiestie of God is to be considered. For
albeit the royall workes of Princes can
ry some part, yet what are they. I pray
you, if they be compared vnto the workes
of God: A Prince with great charges,
much sweate, and long tyme, can scarce
set vp one or two houses, or make a
pauement of marble, but our Lord God
with one worde builded this so great a
frame of the most beautifull heauen:
And what neede I to make mention of
heauen? Behold me the litle flowers of
the field. Merely I say vnto you, saith
Christ, Salomon in all his glorie was
not

The infinit ma-
iestie of God is
to be conside-
red in the royn-
alnesse of Princes.

not so arayed as one of these. Where-
fore the consideration of the royalties of
things is profitable to know the infinite
and unsearchable maiestie of God. But
here marke me with some diligence the
wonderfull workes of God. For I pray
you, what profit leameth this feast of
Assuerus to bring vnto the Church of
the Lord? Where is there any menti-
on made either among the Nobles of
the kingdome, or among the citizens of
Susa of God his true religion, and hel-
ping of the Church of God? Peraduen-
ture not so much as one of the Jewes,
who at y time were the people of God,
was suffered to come to this feast, and
yet our Lorde God is of so great wis-
dome, that he bringeth to passe, that this
feast bringeth to none more profit, then
vnto the church and people of God. For
by occasion of this feast, the Queene
Vathti is throwne downe from her ma-
iestie, and Ester becommeth the wife of
Assuerus, by whom afterwarde the
Church of God is preserved in a most
dangerous time. This example is dili-
gently to be marked, that in all issues
and fallings out of thinges, wee may

How wonder-
fully God cur-
neth this feast
vnto the benefit
of his church.

An Exposition vpon

learne to hope well of the safetie and deliuerie of the Church of the Lord. For nothing seemeth to be so farre from helping of the Church, which God cannot, and will not by his wisedome turne vnto the great profit of the Church. Hereof there are many examples in the holy scriptures, especially in Daniell, chapt. 2, 3. and 6.

Example of the
safetie of the
church.

Now where the common translation hath: neither was there any y^e might compell them to drinke against their willes, &c. In the Hebrue text it is read thus: Their drinking was not constrained according to lawe, because the king had ordeined by the rulers of his house, that euery man should doe as he would.

A double vnder-
standing of these
wordes.

This may be thus vnderstood, that the king graunted, that in this feast y^e publike law and custome of sobrietie, which hitherto had bene kept among the Persians, should be neglected, for that among the Persians was vsed a verie great moderatenes in meat and drinke, euen thus dooth witnesse, that Xenophon writeth, that it was held a shame among the Persians to spit, & to blome their noses. But I will set downe the

wordes

wordes of Xenophon: for this is a
 shame euē at this time among the Per-
 sians, to spee, and to blow their noses,
 and to seeme to be full of vyne. It is al-
 so counted a shame, to goe any whither
 to make water, or for any such other
 things sake. This doubtlesse they could
 not doe, vnles they vled a moderate di-
 et, and by labour did cōsume moisture,
 that it might goe some whither else.
 Thus far Xenophon. But because As-
 suerus would that the Princes and Ci-
 tizens might be mery, and that the feast
 might be most pleasant, hee graunted,
 that contrarie vnto the olde custome of
 the Persians, they might drinke more
 largely, in no certaine and small mea-
 sure, which temperate and moderate
 persons vse to doe, but as much as euē-
 ry man pleased, and as liked him. It is
 no vniust thing, that sometimes, the se-
 ueritie of straight lawes and orders by
 on iust and lawfull causes be somewhat
 abated, but in such sort to abate lawes,
 that occasion may be giuen to sinne a-
 gainst God, and not to keepe other ho-
 nest lawes, this is not to bee a gentle
 Prince, or louing father, but a corrup-

Xenophon: A
 in non
 .22.23

How farse-
 ritie of lawes
 may be abate

How farse-
 ritie of lawes
 may be abate

An other exposition of this place.

Carousing and striuing who should drinke most, an elde practise.

ter of honesty & of the common wealth. But there are some which vnderstande this place otherwise. For they be of opinion that Asuerus in this feast did forbid to carouse one to an other, that one should not compell an other by force to drinke by a like measure of wine, which is wont to bee done among pot companions. If this were forbidden by y^e king, as the wordes of the text doe specifie, it plainly appeareth, y^e striuing to drinke most, is no new thing, but v^{se}d euen at that time in the Empire of the Persians, for if they had not v^{se}d it before, there had bene no occasion to make a law against it in this feast. It is an old saying: Good lawes, doe spring of ill manners. For albeit the Persians by an old ordinance were of a most moderate diet, as a litle before wee haue alleaged out of Xenophon, yet the commendable ordinances of auncestors are wont alwayes to grow into worse, the which the same Xenophon dooth evidently witnesse to haue bene done in Persia, saying thus (for I thinke good to write out here the whole place out of his eight booke of the training vp of Cyrus, because

because it is both pleasant to read, and maketh somewhat for the understanding of this our text.] It was a lawe among the Persians, that no mā shuld spit, or snout his nose. And it is manifest that they ordeined these thinges by lawe, not that they woulde spare the moisture of their bodie, but for that by labour and sweate they would make their bodies the sounder. Now at this time not to spit, nor to snout yet remaineth, but they followe not their labour at all. Before they had a lawe to eate but one meale a day, that they might spend the whole day about their businesse and their labours. And at this time, to take meate once a day remaineth yet still, but they begin earlie in the morning to goe to dinner, and they continue their dinner vntill late in the evening. They had also a law, that pots shoulde not bee brought into their feastes, for that they iudged, the lesse they dryncke, the lesse their bodies and mindes would doo amisse. And now, yet still remayneth, that pottes be not brought in, but in steed of bringing in of pottes, they

Xenophon.
How farre the
Persians in time
were altered in
manners.

An Exposition vpon

themselves are carried out, because that for drunkennes they are not able to goe vpright from their feastes. Thus far Xenophō. Now you see, how far the posteritie of y Persians are growne from y most commendable vertues of their auncestors. Wherefore it is most commendable, that Assuerus mainteineth the publike custome of his auncestors, and forbiddeth, that one compell an other to drunkennes by drinking. And albeit that this kinde of tippling and drunkennes be an horrible wickednesse, and worthy not onely of externall, but also eternall punishment, yet it is no new kind of wickednes vpon earth, as they which are ignorant of old maners doe suppose, but euen from the first finding out of wine, it hath bene vsed among men, more among one nation then among another, & more at one time then an other. For nothing is more auncient vpon earth then wickednesse and sinne. What is more horrible then murdering of a man his brother? And yet straight after the worlde was made, one brother killed an other. What is more abhominable then incest? And yet Lot lieth with his own daughters

Nothing more
auncient then
wickednes.

the Booke of Ester.

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ters being virgins, and Ruben defileth his mother in law, which Patriarches the nearer they were vnto y^e beginning of this worlde, so much the lesse ought they to haue committed such heinous wickednesse. The like is to be iudged of gurmandise and drunkennesse. Christ beareth witnesse that those sinnes were in the world euen before the flood, saying, in the dayes of Noe they did eate, and drinke, &c. And after the flood, this wickednesse was so increased, that it hath taken his names from the Gentiles. Herodotus writeth, that the Scythians galled in wine in such intemperatenesse, that as often as other nations would encourage any man to drinke lustely, they would say, επισκηδιζον that is, play the Scythian. Whereof commeth Pergracari, to ryot notoriously, because that the Gracians behaved themselves too riotously in their feastings. As also at this day he is called among other nations a Dutchman which giueth him selfe too much ouer vnto wine bibbing. But the more olde and common that this vice is, so much the more horrible it is in y^e sight of God,

Gurmandise
and drunken-
nes old finnes.

and

An Exposition vpon

and so much the more sharply shall it be punished by the Lord. **Woe**, saith the Prophet vnto you, that are mightie to drinke wine, and stout men to poure in strong drinke. And **Paule** saith, **Drunkardes** shall not receiue the inheritance of the kingdome of God.

9 Herodotus maketh no mention of this Vasthy.

The Queene Vasthi also made a feast, &c.] The Queene followeth the example of the King, that the feast may be the more royal. Of this Queene there is no mention made in Herodotus, to my remembrance, among the wiues of Darius. But yet it is manifest out of Herodotus, & Darius had other wiues also besides Atossa and Artystona, as Parmy the daughter of Smerdes, the sonne of Cyrus, and Iohedyma the daughter of Otanes, which betrayed the Wise man, and also the daughter of Gobrys. And it was an vsual thing among the Kings of Persia to haue many wiues at once, and not only wiues, but also lemans or concubines. Vasthy therefore was one of his wiues, & which for her excellent beautie at this time, was in cheefe fauour with & King. And Xenophon beareth witness, that the
wiues

Xenophon.

Wives and maidens of the Persians and
Medes did excell both in beautie, and
also bignes of bodie. When as therefore
Vasthi excelled the other women of the
Persians, in her beautie, it is manifest,
that she was of a most excellent, and
incredible fairenes. But if she had bene
of as modest and reuerent a mind to-
wardes the king her husband, as she
was beautifull of personage, neither
had so princely a feast bene troubled, ne-
ther had she bene throned downe from
her royall maiestie. Albeit therefore if
beautie of the body be the gift of God,
and haue his commendation, yet the
beautie of the mind, which doth consist
in honest vertues and maners, doth ex-
ceed all the giftes of the body.

The beautie of
the minde is to
be preferred be-
fore the beautie
of the bodie.

Therefore vpon the seventh day,
when as the king was somewhat me-
ry &c. The Quene commended for
her singular beautie is called of the king,
that being crowned with the crowne
royall she might be shewed vnto the
Princes, but she obeyeth not the king
calling her. Therefore that we may the
better vnderstand what this meaneth,
the maners of the Persians in calling
women

A law of the
Persians.

The meaning of
Assuerus in call-
ling for Vasthi
into the feast.

44

An Exposition vpon

women vnto feastes, are to be knowen.
Iosephus writeth that it was a lawe
among the Persians, by the which was
ordained, that wiues should not come in
the sight of other men. Other writers
witnes that the Persians receiued con-
cubins into their feasts, but not wiues.
But the Ambassadors in Herodorus
say, We Persians haue a law, that as
often as we make any great supper
we take also into our feast our con-
cubins, and young wiues. Hereout
appeareth, that at the first among the
Persians, wiues were not taken into
the feastes of men, and that afterwards
this custome, as others was chaunged.
Wherefore when as Assuerus called
Queene Vasthi into the feast of men,
either his meaning was with the pub-
like consent of his Princes to disauil
the auncient custome of the Persians
(for so many times princes among their
cuppes are wont to make and repeale
lawes) or his meaning was by his ex-
ample to teach that the custome which
before was going to decay, might alto-
gether be contemned. But nothing is
more hurtfull vnto the common welth,
then

then rashly to abrogate and call backe
 olde and honest lawes and customes.
 For albeit ciuill lawes, which some
 times haue craued, are not perpetuall,
 and may in time be chaunged, and that
 vs findeth fault with many, and some
 estate of the common welth doth make
 them vnprofitable, yet to make void
 such lawes, and customes, which haue
 present profite, and the which no neces-
 sitie enforceth to take away, is not to
 take away one or two lawes, but it is
 to diminish the authoritie and maiestie
 of all lawes. This verse is well known:
 the state of Rome standeth by olde
 maners and men. And this saying of
 Plato: Take not away those thinges
 which thou hast not set vp. I speake no
 thing now of ill custome, the which no
 doubt by all meanes, so far as may bee,
 is to be taken away, that men may ra-
 ther follow that which is honest, then
 that which is customable, but I speake
 of that custome the which hath honest
 causes, and specially present profit. Ne-
 ther is my speech of religion, whose cu-
 stomes and seruice if they be out of the
 word of God they are to be kept, but if
 they

Evill customes
 not to be suffer-
 red.

An Exposition vpon

they be against the word of God, they must of necessitie be abolished and taken away. But I speake of politike lawes and custome, in the number wherof, this custome of the Persians also is contained, by which it was not lawfull, to bring wiues into the publike feastes of other men, the which when as it was wisely ordeined by the Elders, Asuerus ought not by his example, either to breake, or being shaken before, to weaken it, but rather with great seueritie to maintaine it. But what shall we say of the Queene? Shall we thinke that she did honestly, in that she obied not the king, calling her vnto the feast of men contrary vnto the auncient custome and commendablenes of the Persians? Shee seemeth in deepe to haue no vniust causes of her fact, but if you shall consider the circumstances of this matter, that which the Queene did, shee did rather of pride and contempt; then of right iudgement. For, when as for her beautie she was preferred before the other of the kinges wiues, she was not contented to haue the chiefe place in feast among the women, and to beare rule

12 Whether the
Queene did
well in refusing
to come.

rule among them, but she would also haue rule ouer her husband the king. Wherefore hauing by the commandement of the king gotten occasiō to shew her ruling ouer her husband, she openly denieth to obey the king calling her, that she might make it appeare before all the women, that she was the kings maister. But this arrogancie and this pride in a woman is worthy of sharpe punishment. For albeit the king commanded those thinges, which seemed against the auncient custome, which hee ought rather to maintaine then to breake, yet because simple in it selfe it is not vngodly for a woman to come vnto the feast of men, it was in the kings pleasure, either to keepe or not to regard this custome in his court. For hereunto apperteineth this common saying: the king giueth and not receiueth the law. And that which pleaseeth the Prince, hath the force of a lawe. Moreover the woman was not made to beare rule ouer her husband, but to be subiect vnto her husband. This verse is common: nature hath not giuen vnto a woman to beare rule. Which is true

The Queene would openly shew her selfe to be the kings maister.

lie said, if by nature you vnderstand, as Basil doth expound it, the worde of God, by which a woman is subiect vnto her husband. For God saith vnto the woman: thou shalt be vnder the power of thy husband, and he shall be ruler ouer thee. Wherefore, as the Queene Vasthi doth offend most arrogantly and most proudly against the king, so is she afterward most iustly punished by diuorcement, and casting downe from her royall maiestie.

12

Whereupon the king being angry, and inflamed with ouer great wrath, &c.] See how great an hurlyburly, and how great confusion ariseth in this feast. The king before so manie Princes receiuing so great a reproch at the hands of his owne wife, is kindled with exceeding great anger, and of a feast there ariseth foule speeches, and a Parlament as it were. This commonly is wont to be the end of too much roialtie, and sumptuous feastes. And albe it the king be greatly angry with the Queene, yet he sheweth in this place an example of moderation and stay in himselfe woorthy to be remembred, and followed.

An example of great moderation and stay in the king Assuerus.

wed. For he falleth not vpon the
Queene like a tyrant, he doth not cruel-
ly slay her, but he refraineth his anger,
he calleth a Parliament of Princes, or
of the kings Judges, that laying their
counsailes and sentences together, they
might debate and take aduice, with
what punishment the reproch done vn-
to the king was to be corrected, and the
arrogancie and pride of the Queene
to be punished. Veriwell in deed. For
what good can there be doone by anger?
For anger is not onely (as one saith)
the beginning of madnes, but also it is
madnes it self, as an other saith, a short
madnes in deed, but yet a madnes. I
would haue punished thee (saith Archy-
tas of Tarentum vnto his bailiffe that
had plaid the loyterer) if I had not been
angry. And these are the sayings and
doings of heathen men. But what do
we that are Christians? We thinke no
time more fit to punish wicked persons,
or such as haue wrought vs despite,
then that time in which we are bur-
ning hot in anger. Wherefore it can
not bee chosen but we must commit
things that we afterwards repent and

Against doing
of things in
anger.

An Exposition vpon

be soꝝ soꝝ. Be angry, saith the Psalme,
and sin not. And Paule: let not the
Sunne go downe vpon your anger.
But we must see, who these wise men
and iudges were, vnto whom the king
referred and put this cause to be iudged.
Herodotus saith thus of the kinges
Judges in Persia: Chosen men of the
Persians, are made the kings Iudges,
who also enioy this office, vntill they
die, vnlesse that any man commit a-
ny vniust thing. These giue iudge-
ment, and are interpreters of the
lawes of their countrey, & all things
doo lye in them. This appointing of
the kinges Iudges was very wiselye
deuised by the Elders of the Persi-
ans. For they did find by experience,
that if they should permit the king free-
ly to do what him list, that he might ea-
sily grow into tyranny. You shall find
some very good Princes, without any
speciall lawes haue most iustly gouer-
ned the common wealth, but the num-
ber is wont to be greater of bad Prin-
ces, then of good. Wherefoze in some pla-
ces common welthes are in such sort
ordered that the kinges haue not abso-
lute

What maner of
men the Iudges
of the Persians
are.

14

lute authoritie to do what they list according vnto their owne pleasure, but there are lawes set downe, and officers to see the lawes kept, which should brydle the willes of Princes, and keepe them within the compasse of their dutie. Such among the Lacedemonians were the Magistrates called Ephori. Onely peradventure in Germany are the seuen Princes Electors. So also among the Persians there were 5 Kings Judges, in whose power was such ordering of the Persian lawes, that the Kings themselues also were bounde to stand vnto that, which was iudged by them. This forme of gouernment, is verie good, and very gentle, and where soeuer it is, it ought with all diligence to be obserued and kept: but whatsoeuer the ordinance of men be, vnles the Lord blesse the kingdome with his fauour, and defend it, the wisdom of man shall do litle good to keepe away tyranny. Make me I pray you, an example in this kingdome of Persia. For albeit the Kings Judges were appointed to brydle the lust of the King, yet when as Canbyles a most cruel tyrant, deman-

Vnlesse God
blesse a king-
dome, no wis-
dome of man
can keepe it
from growing
into tyranny.

An Exposition vpon

ded of them, whither he might according vnto the lawes, marry his sister to wife, they feared his power and tyranny, & answered, that they in deede could finde no law, wherby it was lawfull for the brother to marry his sister, but that there was an other law, wherby it was lawfull for y^e King of the Persians to do what he list. This no doubt was much more to take away the authoritie of lawes, the if the Iudges had freely suffered, that the King might haue married his sister. Wherefore, as great diligence is to be giuen, that y^e lawes may be iust, and the ministers of them iust, so chiefe study and care is to be employed herein, that the name of God be called vpon, that he will vouchsafe of his power and gentlenes to preserve and maintaine the gouernment, and kingdom. For the company of the wicked is so great, the vngodlines of men is so great, the crueltie also of Satan raging against euery common wealth be it neuer so lawfull, is so great, that vntlesse the Lord keepe the Citie, he watcheth in vaine that kepeth it.

And Mamucha answered in the hearing of the King and his Princes,

[&c.]

Sec.] The Oracion of Mamucha, one of the Kings Judges, first laieth downe the offence of the Queene, the which in two respectes is hainous, the one, that the Queene was disobedient & reproche full towards her husband, and the same a kyng, and so mightie a king, & that openly, before so many Princes, and in that feast, which was ordained to set forth his royall maiestie: the other, that through her example shee woulde rayse sedition of other women against their husbandes, in the whole kingdome of the Persians. This deed of the Queene, saith he, shall be noysed abroad vnto all women, the which after the example of the Queene shall despise their husbandes, and shall set litle by the gouernment of their husbandes. Therfore Vasthi shall doe moze hurt by her example then by her fault. Afterwardes hee rehearseth, what punishment the Queen should suffer for her disobedience, namely, that he should be depriued and put from all her royall honour, and be divorced. Lastly, he thinketh good that a publike decree be proclaimed through out the whole Empire of the Persians, and that commandement be giuen, that

I
The offence of
the Queene.

2
The punishment
for the Queene.

3
A publike de-
cree.

An example
worthie to be
noted of all
wiues that seeke
mastership.

women obey their husbands, & acknowledge them to be their Lordes & rulers. These are the partes of this his oration. And this sentense also is agreed vnto by the rest. For the Queene Vasthy is diuorced, & put away, that she haue no longer any royall honour. A most worthie punishment for her pride and disobedience. Shee that would not bee content with her lawfull preeminence and rule among women, but did vsurp, and take vpon her selfe rule ouer her husband, which was vnlawfull, is most iustly punished with deprivation of being put from all preeminence and rule bearing. And she that by seeking of rule bearing, dooth lift her selfe seditiously aboue her husband, is worthely throwen downe from all gouernment, for this is the iudgement of God, which Mary reciteth in her song. Hee scattereth the proude in the imagination of their heart: he putteth downe the mighty from their seate, and setteth vp the humble and lowly. Afterwardes foloweth the publike decree, the which was ordeined in this Parliament, and proclaimed not only through one countrey,

the Booke of Ester.

frey, nor in one tōng, but in diuerse
tōngs vnto all the prouinces of y^e king-
dome of Persia. The meaning of the
decree was, that not women, but men
should be Lordes and Princes in their
owne houses. What shall we say then
of this decree? It seemeth in deed a fond
thing, that such a matter should bee
handed in a publike Parliament of a
kingdome, and it is a token, that in the
kingdome of Persia, the gouernment
cōsisted rather in women then in men:
or that the women of Persia were ra-
ther masters then the men: but the de-
cree is necessary, and not newly found
out by these Persian Princes, but or-
deined by God himselfe euen from the
beginning of the worlde. For hee saith
vnto the woman: Thou shalt be vnder
the power of thy husband, and he shall
be ruler ouer thee. This is not to bee
vnderstood of Eva alone, but of all wo-
men. I suffer not a woman, saith Paul,
to teach, nor to vse authoritie ouer their
husbandes, but to be in silence. And a-
gaine: ye women be subiect vnto your
owne husbands, as vnto the Lord, be-
cause the man is the head of the wife,

In Persia by all
likelihood wo-
men were rather
masters, then
men.

Women may
not be masters
ouer their hus-
bands.

An Exposition vpon

Some women
will be masters,
say God or man
to the contrary.

Whereof it
cometh that
some women
are masters.

like as Christ is the head of the congrega-
tion, or Church. But albeit it hath
beene so ordeined as well by God, as
in the Parliament of the most mightie
Monarchy of Persia, that men should
beare rule, euery man in his owne
house, yet this ordinance is neuer in
such sort kept, that there are not some
houses found, in which women beare
rule & haue the maistray. This no doubt
is a great sedition, against the naturall
ordnance of God. And the cause of this
sedition is, not only the vnstayed and
vntameable nature of women, but also
the colwardinesse and vngodlinesse of
men, who when as they obey not the
calling and will of God, but lead either
an idle, or a wicked, or an vngodly life,
it is no maruell that women obey not
them in their calling and will. Where-
fore, he that will beware of home sedi-
tion, and keepe his family in obedience,
first of all must haue regarde, that he
himself be not seditious against God,
and that he himself performe his due o-
bedience vnto God.

The

2

the Booke of Ester.

y 67

The second Chapter.

1

THese thynges beeyng thus doone, after that the wrath of Assuerus, &c.] Assuerus, his anger being nowe calmed, maketh mentiō of Vasthi among his courtiers, the which Vasthi he had diuorced. And whither he repented him of his deed, or whither vpon any other occasion he made mention of Vasthi, this is without question, that it was not lawfull for him to call backe the sentence of the Kings Judges, and to take her againe whom he had put away. For the authoritie of these Judges was such, that the King himselfe must stand vnto their sentence. Wherefore his seruants of the court exhort the King, that calling together many most beautiful maidens, he should choose out of them the fayrest into the place of Vasthi. Which counsaile liketh the King very well. Wherefore there are sought for out of all the kingdom of Persia, virgins most excellling in fairenesse and comelinesse. This is a setting out of the maners of
the

2

A paterne of
court maners
and of the life
of Princes.

To haue many
wiues at once.

the court, & of the life of Princes. The King, albeit he had many more wiues besides Vasthy, yet because common thinges are naught set by, he is weary of them. And his seruants follow the humoꝛ of the King, and looke wherebin to they see his minde inclinde, thither with their exhortatiōs they moue him. And albeit at that time it was lawfull foꝛ one man to haue many wiues at once, and that Ester by this occasion were aduanced vnto Princely maiesty, yet it pleased not God, that kings shuld haue many wiues, at once. Of y King of Israell the scripture speaketh. Hee shall not haue many wiues, least his heart be turned away. And Polygamy, oꝛ hauing of many wiues, that is, when one man at one time hath many wiues, is against the law of nature. Foꝛ wher as God sayd: They shall be two in one flesh, it is the law of nature, whereby one man is ioyned to one wife only, foꝛ the man, after y he hath married a wife, hath not power ouer his owne body, as Paul saith: wherefoze hauing married one wife, he cannot betake himself to an other. And as one womā is bound to one man,

man, and cannot giue her selfe vnto an other husband, so likewise can not the husband giue him selfe vnto an other wife, for as much as neither he nor she haue power ouer their owne bodie. What will you then say of the Patriarches, who had many wiues at once? Did they sinne against the lawe of nature? That which the Patriarches did, was in deede against the law of nature, but yet they sinned not against God, because the thing which they did, they did by the graunting of God. Cain married to wife his owne sister. And albeit Cain otherwise was a wicked man, and this mariage is against the law of nature, yet in this behalfe he sinned not against God, because necessity excused his fact. Iacob married two sisters to his wiues; This in two respectes was against the law of nature, and yet God suffering it, and wincking at it, he sinned not. So also other of the Patriarches had many wiues, not that it should be drauone into an example alwaies to endure, but that God wincking at it, marriage at his time should returne againe vnto the ordinance of the

The Patriarches
had many
wiues.

the law of nature, yea the very heathen did see that Digami (that is, when one man hath two wiues at once) was not honest. Hermione in Euripides, saith, It is not good for one man to haue the rule of two wiues, but looking vnto one lawfull loue, her they make much of, as many as are not disposed to liue waywardly. And againe: I will neuer praise men that haue two wiues. But you wil say, they are women that speake these things. Very well. But there is in women, as well as in men a feeling of that which is honest. And the Poet, which maketh women to speake these wordes, is an interpreter of the law of nature. But what rekening soeuer be made of this saying of an Heathen, doubtlesse Christ saith plainly: they are not now two, but one flesh. When as therefore marriage maketh of man and woman one flesh, the nature of marriage cannot beare, that a man should haue more wiues then one at once, & albeit y some of the holy Patriarches had many wiues at once, this was not done the law allowing it, but God graunting it. For it is also a law
of

To haue many
wiues at once
is against the
nature of marriage.

of nature : Thou shalt not kill, and yet
God graunteth vnto the lawfull ma-
iestrate without punishment to slay the
wicked. Likewise it is a law of nature:
Thou shalt not steale, and yet the Is-
raelites sinned not when as they stole
from the Egyptians vessels of gold, the
Lord our God graunting this theft.
So also it is a law of nature: Let one
man haue onely one wife, yet the Pa-
triarches sinned not in that they had
many wiues at once. For the wiues
which they had, they had God graun-
ting, and winkung at it. But when as
personall priuiledges do not take away
a generall law, this law of nature al-
waies remaineth strong, and for ever,
that it is lawfull for one man to haue
but one wife onely. And this much con-
cerning this matter.

There was a man in the citie of
Susa, named Mardocheus, &c.] You
haue plainly in this place that Ester
was called Adassa, which name agreeth
with Atossa, whom Herodotus doth
make the wife of Darius, or of Assue-
rus. But because he saith that shee was
the daughter of Cyrus, and that this
thing

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An Exposition vpon

Mardocheus.

6
thing is very far from our age, it cannot be so certainly affirmed, that Ester is that Atossa which Herodotus speaketh of, and yet must we needs thinke that to be true, which the holy scripture doth teach vs. Furthermore, Ester was the daughter of the brother of Mardocheus, which Mardocheus tooke his originall and beginning from Kis the father of Saule, of the tribe of Benjamin. And this same Mardocheus, when he was about ten yeares of age, was led away into banishment with Iechonias king of Iuda, of the which leading away there is written 4. kinges 24. And he is said to haue liued 18. yeares more then Isaac, that is an 187. or an 188. yeares. There is also mention made of Mardocheus among the princes, Esdr. 2. Nehem. 7. But if the same Mardocheus, of whom Esdras and Nehemias make mention, bee all one with Mardocheus; which is set out in this booke, it appeareth that he was of great authoritie among his people. For albeit he be said to haue returned with other princes vnto Ierusalem, yet the thing it selfe doth witnes, that after the
hea

heathen which bordered vpon them, had forbidden and letted the Iewes fro building the temple, he returned with other Princes into the court of Persia, that they might stand in place for the people of God, and might, by what occasion soeuer they cou'd, obtain that the temple and citie should be builded. This is also further set downe, that Ester lost her parents in the captiuitie, and that Mardocheus tooke her vnto his charge. The Scripture reciteth not this in vaine, but to teach vs, that we should compare and lay together the thinges done concerning Ester, and that wee should know the wonderfull mercy of God. For the parents of Ester were led into banishment, and of how much the more greater authoritie they were among their countrie men at home, so much the more grieuous was their captiuitie. Moreouer they die in banishment, and leaue behind them a daughter an Orphan. Wherefore Ester seemeth of all other the most miserable, and most abiect, not onely for that her parents were cast out of their owne countrey, & lead captiues into bondage

Ester being fatherles is brought vp by Mardocheus

The wonderfull mercy of God.

An Exposition vpon

of vngodly kinges, but also that she her
 selfe in banishment and bondage, was
 left without the comfort of her parents.
 But here consider me the vnmeara-
 ble mercy and care of God, wherewith
 he embraceth the afflicted and in misery,
 The most miserable maiden, first by the
 appointment of God, is receiued into
 the charge of her vncle Mardocheus,
 a very good man and most Godly. Af-
 terward shee is chosen to be Queene of
 the whole Empire of Persia. How
 could her parents, I will not say hope
 for, but at least wish for so great bene-
 fites at the hand of God? They seemed
 to be carried into banishment and bon-
 dage, but behold their daughter is ad-
 uauanced into Princely maiestie. They
 seemed by their death to leaue their
 daughter void of all helpe, but God lif-
 teth her vp vnto such highnes, that shee
 is reuerenced of all men. What is then
 to be led into banishment else, but to be
 aduauanced vnto a kingdome? What is
 it else to be left of our parents, then to
 be receiued into the charge both of God
 and men? But this you will say sell out
 onely vnto Elter. But how many thou-
 sand

the Booke of Ester.

sand maidens were there in the meane
 while of the Jewes, whose parents as
 they were oppressed with most misera-
 ble bondage, so they left them after them
 in all kind of calamitie and miserie,
 who, so farre off is it that they were ad- Answer,
 naunced vnto royall honour, that in ex-
 treme pouertie they had much a doo to
 keepe away hunger. Here therefore
 marke me, that this history was not
 put in writing vnto the church of God,
 for Ester alone, but for y^e whole church.
 What thinges soeuer, (saith Paule)
 are written, are written for our lear-
 ning, that through patience and cō-
 fort of the Scriptures we should haue
 hope, Further helpe and deliuey out
 of miseries, are not promised by God
 vnto Ester onely, but vnto all that call
 vpon the name of the Lord by faith.
 Call vpon me, saith he, in the day of
 trouble, and I will deliuer thee, and
 thou shalt honour me. And againe:
 Euerie one that calleth vpon the name
 of God shall be saued. Furthermore,
 God doth good vnto the poore maiden
 Ester, not onely for her sake, but also
 for the whole Church sake. For albeit

An Exposition vpon

god by this benefite doth not shewe, that he will aduance euery maiden vnto princely maiestie of this world, yet by this example hee hath warranted his promise, in the which he auoucheth himselfe to be a father of the fatherlesse, and a deliuerer of them that are in miserie. Wherefore albeit many other maidens in the captiuitie of Babilon did not come vp vnto princely honour, yet if they were godly, and in their trouble called vpon God by faith, they perished not, but obtained at the handes of God so much the more deliuerance and saluation, by howe much in this worlde they were more miserable among men. And God deliuered them from euill, and made them partakers of his heauēly maiestie, then the which happines none could be more greater deuised or thought on.

And her father and mother being dead Mardocheus tooke her for his owne daughter &c.]

An exāple wherby kinsme are taught with all dуетie and kinde of good will that they can, to helpe the fatherles children of their dead kinsfolke. For albeit
God

The more the
faichfull are
troubled among
men, the more
care hath God
ouer them.

Cap. 2. ver. 7.

God call himself the father of the fatherles, yet he requireth, that euery one of their friendes or neighbours that are left aliue, should be his fellow helpers. There shall no pore be wanting, saith he, in the land of thy dwelling, therefore I commaund thee, that thou open thine hande vnto thy brother, vnto the needie and poore, which dwell with thee in the land. And who is moze miserable and poze then Orphanis, and fatherles children, who are either left by their parents in pouertie, or if they haue gooddes, they can not dispose them by reason of the weakenes of their age and reason. Their friendes therfore and neighbours that are liuing must be furtherers, helpers and instruments of God, that in them that care may shine, which God hath taken vpon him for the fatherles. But you will lay vnto me, the fatherles and such as are vnder Guardians when they come to age, requite them very ill, which haue been their gouerners. Be it so. And wilt not thou because of the vnthankfulness of men, folow the calling of God? Men reward not thy benefits, but God will

Objection.

Answer.

thing. For the one doo then vse to lye, when as by getting their lye to be beleued, they are like to gaine something, and the other tell the truth, to win some gaine. And one is readie this way, an other that way. And thus in not doing all one thing, wee obteine all one matter. But if there were no gaines to be gotten, in lyke maner both hee that speaketh truth would become a liar, and a liar a speaker of truth. Whosoever is of this opinion, what should he heare else, than this, which is in the Comedie, Thou vile varlet. For this is knowne euen vnto the very nature of man, and vnto reason it selfe, that honestie is to be preferred before profite, and that there is nothing profitable, vnlesse the same be also honest. But what is more vishonest, or more shamefull the a lyer. Learne at the leastwise of the Autho: of lying, how great the shame of a lye is: The Diuill, saith Christ, is a lyer, and the father therof. How much more honestly speaketh Achilles in Homer: I hate him as the gates of hell, which one thing thinketh in his heart, an other with

Nothing more
shamefull then
a lye.

with his too long dooth tell.

Who also walked euery day before the court, &c. The diligent care of Mardocheus for Ester, is therefore set forth, that it may be compared with that honour which Mardocheus afterward obtained, and to teach Gardians, that after the example of Mardocheus they should not thinke much to take any paines, albeit neuer so troublous, for fatherlesse children. For the time will come, when as all things shall be most liberally rewarded.

Chap. 2. ver. 116

27

And when as the time of all the maydens was come, &c. Behold the great rofe and excellence, wherewith the lounes and concubines were prepared and made ready vnto the lust of a kings of the Persians. They say that it was sometimes the manner among the Sybarites, that the women were hidden vnto a year or more before; & they might at their pleasure tricke vp themselves with golde and garments. It also is it set downe in this place as a custome of the Persians, according vnto which, looke what virgins they were to deliuer in marriage vnto the King, they were

Chap. 2. v. 12. 13
14. 15.

22

A custome of
the Sybarites.

twelue moneths, that is to say, a whole
 yere in cleansing and trimming them
 with diuerse ointments and paintings.
 Cicero also telleth of an other kinde of
 riotous exesse, the which the Kinges of
 the Persians vsed to set out their wiues
 withall. The barbarous Kinges of the
 Persians and Syrians are wont sayth
 he, to haue many wiues. And vnto
 these wiues to appoint cities after
 this maner: Let this citie giue vnto
 the woman ornaments for their head,
 an other citie for her necke, an other
 for her haire. So they haue all people
 not only priuy vnto their riotous ex-
 cesse, but also ministers of the same.
 Such exceeding riot the heere. Heauen
 themselves haue not allowed, and yet
 godly. But most neede is vnto this
 custome of the Persians. And she might
 with a good conscience beare such trim-
 ming vp of her selfe according vnto the
 maner of that nation, in the which shee
 was a captiue and prisoner. And as con-
 cerning her selfe, she sought after none
 of these things. Shee desired nothing
 saith the scripture, saying that which
 Heger the Kinges Eunuch or Cham-
 berlaine,

Cicero.

to be of such a
 nature as

berlaine, the keeper of the women,
of his own accord did giue vnto her.
And in her prayer (the which notwithstanding
is counted Apocrypha,) she
saith thus vnto the Lorde: Helpe mee
thine handmayd, hauing none other
helpe; but thee O Lord, which hast
knowledge of all thinges, and doest
knowe that I hate the glorie of the
wicked, & do detest and abhorre the
bed of the vncircumcised, and of all
straungers. Thou knowest my neces-
sitie, that I doo loath the token of
any pride and glory, which is vpon
mine head, in the dayes of my bra-
uerie, and shewing of my selfe, &c.
Wherefore when as Ester in sayth yel-
ded vnto the custome, which was not of
it self wicked and vngodly, she obtained
so much the more fauour with God, by
how much the more she desired to bee
cleansed with the spirite of God, then
with the oyntments of the Persians.

Therefore shee was brought vnto
the Chamber of the King Assuerus
in the tenth moneth, &c.] Which
moneth of the Hebrewes is called Te-
beth, and answereth vnto our Decem-
ber.

Chap. 2. v. 18. 17.

An Exposition vpon

ber. In this moneth therefore Ester be-
fore a captiue and banished person, is
giuen vnto King Assuerus, and not lōg
after, is crowued with the crowne of
the kingdome, and made Queene. Now
it doth me good to rehearse this saying
of the Psalme: Who is like vnto the
Lorde our God, who dwelleth on
high, and beholdeth the low thinges
both in heauen and earth. Rayling
vp the poore from the ground, and
lifting vp the needie from the dung-
hill. To place him with Princes, yea
with the Princes of his people: For
we must not thinke, that Ester was
made Queene, for her selfe alone, or else
for y^e Jewes sake, that they afterwards
being in great daunger might be deli-
uered, but for the whole church, that in
this example might be set out the mercy
of God, and the sayth of all them that
are in the Church might bee exercised.

The use of this
hystorie.

A singular com-
fort.

For albeit that all which are in mi-
sery, calling vpon the name of God by
faith, be not made kings of this world,
yet as God then appointed the royall
maiestie vnto Ester, when as shee was
not ouerly left of her parents an orphan

in captiuitie and banishment, but also when as her parents were carried away from Jerusalem into captiuitie and bondage, she not being yet borne, so god then especially aboue all other times meaneth to blesse and saue vs, when as trouble and killings are cast vpon vs. Therefore the holy Ghost by this example of Ester doth witnes, that aduersitie vnto the godly is as a shoppe and storehouse of greatest prosperitie.

And he commanded a most sumptuous feast to be made &c] A marriage feast is ordeined. But we haue entreated befoze of the furniture of the Persian feastes. And Herodotus in Calliope doth mention the same. For Mardonius a Captaine of the Persians being ouercome, and all his household stuffe being taken, Pausanias commanded his Bakers and Cookes to prepare him a supper as vnto Mardonius. The which when as they had done, then Pausanias beholding the golden and siluer beddes very well couered, as also the golden and siluer tables, and the royall preparation, he was astonied, &c. But when as the scripture saith, that
Assue-

Cap. 2. ver. 18.

19.

18

Mardonius

An Exposition vpon

Assuerus gaue rest vnto al the Prouinces, albeit that some vnderstand it of the releasing of tributes, of that yeare, yet it is moze likely that Assuerus at his marriage, ordeined a feast day to bee kept in all his Prouinces, that his marriage might be honozed with a publike rest or holie day. And whereas the king in this marriage gaue giftes vnto his gesses, when as notwithstanding it is an vsuall thing for the gesses to honoz the new married persons with presents and giftes, what this meaneth is manifest out of Zenophon. For thus he writeth in his eight booke of the bringing vp of Cyrus: Cyrus began this, the which to this day remaineth as a custome among the Kings, in bestowing of great giftes. For vnto whom are there richer frends shewed then vnto the king of the Persians? And who seemeth to reward his freends with more faire robes then the king? Whose giftes are knowne in deede to be princelike, as bracelets, chaines, horses decked with golden bridles. For there it is not lawfull for any man to haue these things

Giuing of
giftes.

Solemnitie and
pompe at mar-
riages.

things, vnto whome the kinge
hath not giuen them &c. Now con-
cerning the Solemnitie and pompe,
wherewith marriages are wont to be
set out euen in our time, thus we are to
thinke, that albeit it bee not needefull
vnto the confirmation of marriages
yet if it bee moderate, and not exceeding
measure, and agreeable vnto euery
mans calling, it is not to be condemned.
For marriage is honorable among all
men, saith the Apostle. And when as
honesty doth require, that marriage
should be publike, that it may be made
manifest, that the man doth dwell law-
fully with the woman, Solemnitie and
pompe is profitable, that by it the thing
be spread abroad, which ought to bee
knowne vnto the neighbors. Hereunto
is ioyned, that when as the weak mind
is moued about the unhappines of ma-
riage (for the discommodities in wed-
locke are diuerse) to thinke that God is
not the autho^r of this ioining together,
but rather the Deuil, the remembrance
of the Solemnitie of marriage doth som-
what profite, that thereby the minde
may be strengthened, and that it maye
know

2
An Exposition vpon

know that his marriage was of God, in that it was allowed by lawfull and publike ordinance. Wherefore the solemnitie of marriage may also further godlines. But here great heede is to bee taken, that no man in the setting out of the solemnitie of marriage doe breake out beyond his bondes as they say.

Cap. 2. ver. 20.

20

For what so euer be commaunded, Ester obserued and kept, &c.] This is a great commendation of the godlines and modestie of Ester. For albeit she were chosen to be Queene, yet she did not despise, she did not disdain her vncle, which had brought her vp, namely Mardocheus, but depended on his authoritie, as before. This is in deede to obey this commaundement of God: Honor thy father and thy mother.

Cap. 2. ver. 21.

21.

21

At that time therefore when as Mardocheus sate at the kings gate, &c.] The Eunuches or Chamberlains lye in wayt to slay the King. But Mardocheus by Ester doth open vnto the King the treason and conspiracy of the Chamberlains against the King. Wherefore the Chamberlaines are hanged on the

the gallowes. First you shall marke here, how many daungers the life of a king is subiect vnto, and therefore the meane estate of life is commended, and that verse is knowne: they haue many commodities, which do liue in the meane kind of life. I had rather therefore in a citie be in a meane place, then in the highest.

Kinges subiect
vnto many dan-
gers.

Moreover see, with how great mercie and liberalnes God recompenceth those benefites, which are done vnto the godly. Assuerus doth good vnto Ester an Orphan, and chooseth her to be Quene. God therefore doth good againe vnto Assuerus, and bringeth to passe, that by the meanes of Mardocheus and Ester he saue his owne life. Therefore Assuerus seemed in deed for to haue done a great good turne vnto a poore maid, but thereby he doth greatly pleasure himselfe.

God rewardeth
the good which
is done vnto
his.

Esther 1. 16
17

You haue also in this place an example of the seueritie or sharpenes of God against the treasons of the wicked. For Assuerus gat the kingdome by the ordinance of God, as we haue shewed before. Wherefore, albeit he folowed not

The iudgement
of God against
treason.

If true

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An Exposition vpon

true iustice, yet the Chamberlaines do most wickedly and seditiously, in that they seeke to kill him, and therefore it commeth to passe by the iust iudgement of God, that their treason come to light, and that they are put to death for the same. Ecclesiastes saith: Slaunder not the king in thy thought, and speake not euill of the rich man in thy priuie chamber, because that the birdes of the aire will carry thy wordes, and they which haue winges will bewray thy mind.

A lesson for
Subjectes.

Moreover here is commended the faithfulness of Mardocheus towards the king, by which example subiectes are taught, that they defend the life of their magistrates, by al the meanes they can. But what? Thou wilt say: Was not this betraying, that Mardocheus openeth the priuie counsaile of the Chamberlaines, that they may be taken & hanged? Truly it was no vnlawfull betraying, but a lawfull opening of wicked treason, and a defending of y^e king, the which euer y^e faithfull subiect oweth vnto his magistrate. So also they which at the commandemēt of the magistrate do

2

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the Booke of Ester.

doe complaine of drunkards and blasphemers, are not betrayers, but preservers of publike honestie. For to betray, is not lawfully to reveale and open the guiltie, that they may either be taken hede off, or punished, that they doo no hurt, but it is by one his counsaile or betraying to deliuer a guiltlesse person vnto lawfull aduersaries and waylayers, as Judas betrayed Christ vnto the Iewes, and they of Seila betrayed Dario vnto Saule.

What it is, to betray.

Last of al, thou seest Mardocheus for the present to receiue no reward for his faithfulness, but when as he waited vpon the Lord, his faithfulness afterward was liberally recompensed. For hee had the next place vnto the king. By which example we are taught, not to be weary of welldoing. For albeit our welldoing be not presently recompensed, yet there is a God in heauen, which neuer forgetteth the seruice that we haue done.

God rewardeth alwaies presently.

¶ 2

Chap-

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3
An Exposition vpon

Chapter 3.

Cap. 3. ver. 1. 2.

Who Aman
was.

Question.

After this king Assuerus lifted
vp Aman &c.] Amā being ex-
alted and aduanced vnto great
honour by Assuerus, doth abuse
his power to destroy the people of God.
Therefore he is an example of a most
wicked and most cruell tyrant against
the Church of God. But first of all let
vs see who this Aman was, for the
Scripture saith that he was an Aga-
gite, that is, as Iosephus doth interpret
it, an Amalechite. for in the first booke
of the kinges and fiftēth chapter, A-
gag, was king of the Amalechites,
whom Samuel did slay. Therefore they
thinke that Aman was of the stocke of
this Agag. If this be true, as it appea-
reth, how doth God suffer that Aman
should be exalted vnto so great honour,
when as Moises notwithstanding by
the spirite of God affirmeth, that God
him selfe would alwaies fight against
Amalec: saying, his hand being vpon
the throne of the Lord, the war of God
shall be against Amalec from generati-
on

on vnto generation. Hath God forgotten his promise? Nothing lesse truely, but now especially he doth remember it, that by a manifest example hee may teach, y he neuer forgetteth his word, albeit through most long continuance and distance of time it may seeme vnterly to haue perished.

Answer

For when as God was minded to cast downe into vtter destruction Aman and his whole family, the which were remnants of the Amalachites, he suffereth Aman to be exalted vnto greatest honour. For as the Lord minding to exalt the godly, suffereth them first to bee cast downe, examples whereof are Ioseph, Dauid, Daniell, yea and Christ himself the Sonne of God, so God meaning to throw downe the wicked, suffereth them to be exalted, the which you see in Pharao, Saule, Nebuchadnezar, Herod, and many others. The very Heathen haue marked this iudgement of God, that sodaine and great felicitie bringeth with it infelicitie as a companion. Philip of Macedonia, when as newes was brought vnto him, that in one day many thinges fell out

The wonderfull dealing of God.

An Exposition vpon

very happily, he cryed out, O fortune
for so many and so great good thinges
send me some small misery. An other,
when as he had escaped great daunger,
and was sayd to be most happy, answered:
O fortune vnto what aduenture
dost thou reserue and keepe mee? Wee
also are wont to wish, that God pro-
uide, that no great fortune shine vnto
vs, that we be not driuen for to cry out
against fortune this of the Poet: Thou
hast set me vp, thou the same again dost
cast me downe. It is most pleasant to
read, that Herodotus in Thaleia dooth
write of Amasis and Polycrates. For
when as Polycrates had alwayes had
most happie fortune, Amasis would no
longer be lincked with him in friend-
ship, but sending vnto him an Herald,
broke with him the band of friendship,
because that the wise man did foresee
that great infelicitie would follow that
great felicitie on earth. Neither did his
opinion deceaue him. For Polycrates
not long after was hanged. You see the
iudgement of God whereby the wicked
are lifted vp on high, y they may come
downe with the greater fall, to haue
beene

Polycrates and
Amasis.

3
the Booke of Ester.

beene knowne vnto the very Heathen. Wherefore when as wicked Aman obtineth most high honour, God forgetteth not his worde against the Amalechites, but in his greatest honour, minneth his greatest shame and destruction.

Only Mardocheus bowed not his knee, &c.] Aman among the Persians generally is had in great reuerence, onely Mardocheus did no reuerence vnto him. This dede of Mardocheus seemeth to be rash, wayward, and full of pride and disdaine. For albeit diuine honour or such as belongeth vnto God, be not to be giuen vnto Princes, yet after their maner they are to be worshipped, that is to say, reuerenced. For so Iacob worshipped and reuerenced his brother Esau. So the Israelites worshipped or reuerenced their Kings. Herevnto is to be adioyned, that Assuerus commanded to worship, that is to say, to reuerence Aman, as a chiefe Prince. The Kings meaning was not, that Aman should be worshipped as a God, but that he should haue such honour giuen vnto him, as is due vnto Princes.

2
Mardocheus
will not reue-
rence Aman.

Iacob.
The Israelites.

Princes. And obedience is to be yelded vnto the commandements of Kinges, if there be no vngodly things commaunded. And Princes must haue their due honour giuen vnto them. Wherefore Mardocheus seemeth through his pride to sin, and to bring the whole nation of the Iewes with him, rashly and waywardly into that same great daunger, which afterward followeth. But wee are to iudge far otherwise of the fact of Mardocheus. For in that he despised Aman, and would not reuerence him, it is not a worke of the flesh, but of the spirit. It maketh nothing for this place, which is ascribed vnto him in his prayer, the which is Apocrypha, and of no authoritie. For they feine him to say thus vnto God, Thou knowest & vnderstandest all things, that I haue not done this thing of pride, and despite, or of any desire of glorie, that I wold not worship most proude Aman. For I would bee readie for the wealth of Israell, to kisse the very print of his feete: but I feared least I should giue the honour of my God vnto a man, and to worship any man, except my
God

God. For all these thinges after a certaine feyning, are giuen vnto Mardocheus. And as for the first part, it is godly spoken, but the latter, wherein Mardocheus is sayd to affirme that he would worship none but God, albeit it be a godly speech, yet is it not fit for this place, because it is lawfull, without any iniury vnto God, ciuilly to worship or reuerence Princes. That fable also of the Jewes is to be reiecte or cast away, wherin they say that Aman wore a certaine golden or siluer Picture hanging about his necke, and that therfore Mardocheus would not bow his knees before Aman, least he might seeme to worship the image. Whereupon the Jewes also do forbid theirs to drinke of that fountaine, whose water spouteth out of the image of a man or woman, least that in bowing downe their head vnto the water pipe, they should seeme to worship the image. These are Jewish superstitions. But Mardocheus was a godly man, and that which hee did, he did by the godly counsell of the spirite. For he did know that Aman was an Amalechite, of the stocke of A-

A Jewish fable.

Jewish Superstition.

An Exposition vpon

Agag, namely, that King for whose sake the family of Saule, vnto y^e which Mardocheus belonged, as hath bene shewed before, was cast from royall maiestie in Israell, because that Saule had spared Agag, contrary vnto the commandement of God, as it is w^ritten in the first booke of Kinges, chap. 15. The danger therefore the which befell vnto the house of Saule for shewing mercie vnto Agag, made Mardocheus wary, and fearing God, least that he in reuerencing Aman, which was of the posteritie of Agag, should encrease y^e which his auncestors offended in for Agag his sake. For he called vnto minde, that which God had spoken of the destroying of the Amalechites. In Exodus he saith: I will blot out the remembrance of Amelech vnder heauen. And in Deuteronomy: Remember what Amelech did vnto thee. And immediately, when as the Lord thy God shal giue thee rest, and shall subdue vnto thee all the natiōs round about thee in the land, the which hee hath promised thee, thou shalt roote out his name vnder heauen: Take heed thou forget

forget it not. And vnto Saule : Go, strike Amalec, and throw downe all that is his. Spare him not, and desire nothing of the thinges that are his, but slay from man vnto woman, &c.]

These things did Mardocheus set before the eyes of his minde, by the which he vnderstood that all the nation of Amalec, and all the posteritie of Agag King of the Amalechites, amongst the which also was Aman, were before God accursed and damned. Therefore Mardocheus being stirred vp by the holy Ghost, with a stout and free mind dooth confesse himselfe to be a Jew, and that with his reuerence he woulde not blesse him, whom God had accursed, and whom God alreadie before, had appointed vnto euerlasting punishment. This doubtlesse was a noble courage, the which, so far of is it that it should be taken for sinne of man his carnall pride, that it ought rather to be counted great godlinesse. For in that that danger followed, it dooth not reprove Mardocheus of folly, or vnreasonableness, but was done therefore, that God by this occasion might throw downe wicked

Mardocheus
sinned not, in
not doing honour
vnto Aman.

An Exposition vpon

ked Aman, and deliuer his people, that they might bee commended vnto the king, and defended from their enemies.

Cap. 7. ver. 5. 6.

5

Which when Aman had heard, and by tryall had learned &c.] As in Mardocheus is set out an example of a valiant and constant mind, so in Aman is described an example of an vnstaid and womanly mind. For Aman, albeit he be of all others had in great reuerence, yet can he not bear with a quiet mind the contempt of one poore Jew, but when as he seeth him selfe to be despised and not regarded of a Jewe, is so moued and disquieted, that he mindeth to destroe not onely Mardocheus, but also the whole nation of the Jewes, in all the kingdome of Persia. You see first therefore in Aman the old nature of the Amalechites. For the Amalechites euen from the beginning bare such hatred vnto the Israelites, that by all the meanes they could, they intended their destruction. Remember saith the Scripture, what Amalec did vnto thee in the way, when as thou canst out of Egypt, howe he met thee,

A paterne of
the old nature
of the Amale-
chites.

thee, and slewe the himmost of thy company, which sate downe wearie, when as thou was faint with hunger and trauell, and he feared not God. Therefore that olde hatred of the Amalechites towarde the Israelites, bewrayeth it selfe in Aman now, so that it is most true which is said in the olde prouerbe, of an ill crow, an ill egge. Further you haue in Aman what is the nature of enuie. For Aman is not content with the death of Mardocheus alone, of whom he was despised, but hee mindeth the destruction of al the Jewes. So is enuy. It is not satisfied with a small punishment of her aduersarie, but seeketh the destruction of all the frends and kinsfolke of her aduersarie. Then the which affection as there is nothing more bniust, so is there nothing more diuinish, and therefore the holy Scriptures do iustly pronounce, that the enuious shall not be heires of the kingdome of heauen, but of euerlasting fire.

The nature of enuy.

In the first moneth, whose name is Nisan, &c.] Whereas the common translation hath: The lot was put into the

Gap 2. ver. 7.

the pot the which in hebrewe is called Phuk, before Aman, at what day and in what moneth the nation of the Jewes should be slain, and the twelfth moneth came forth, there according vnto the truth of the Hebrewe it is to read thus: And one did cast Phuk, that is to say, a lot, before Aman from day to day, and from moneth to moneth vntill the twelfth moneth. And the Scripture seemeth to shew, that Aman sought out by lot, in what moneth and at what day he might luckily and with good successe deale with the king to obtaine at the kinges hand to haue all the Jewes put to death, also in what moneth, and at what day the Jewes might easely and luckely be slaine, and pulled vp by the rote. And therfore you see Aman to be not onely an enuious and cruell tyrant, but also a wicked sorcerer. For it is vngodlynes, by lots to seeke what season is lucky, and what unlucky. It is an other thing to obserue and marke the time to plant, or to let blood according vnto the naturall rules of the Whisitions and naturall Philosophers, for this is a wisdom in his kind

Aman a force-
rer.

kind worthy of Commendation. But by lots to search out the luckines or unluckines of daies to come, is a wicked abuse of lottes. Moreover the moneth Nisan, which the Scripture rekeneth for the first moneth, is that moneth among the Hebrewes, in which the Passeouer ought to be kept, and answereth partly vnto March, and partly vnto Aprill. And the moneth Adar, which in this place is said to bee the twelfth moneth, answereth vnto our Februarie, and partly vnto March.

Nisan.

Adar.

Aman said vnto king Asuerus, there is a people scattered throughout al thy Prouinces, &c. The oration of Aman doth consist of two partes. The first, is an accusation. The latter a counsaile & exhortation. The Iewes are accused, for that they trouble the publike peace of the Church, for that they are disobedient and seditious vnto publike lawes. This is an vsuall accusation against the Church of God. Of which thing also there is an example in Eldras, cap. 4. And it is maruaile if Aman did not make mention of the empire, whersin the nations bordering vpon

Cap. 3. ver. 8.
vid. 494.

An accusation.

A counsaile.

An vsuall accusation against the Church of God.

upon them, accused the Iewes, which
begunne to build the temple of the Lord
in Ierusalem.

The Iewes also doe accuse Christ
himselſe of ſedition, and that he was a
troubler of the publike peace. And af-
terward the Heathen cryed out againſt
the Chriſtians, and auouched that they
were the authours and cauſe of all pub-
like calamities. If the ryuer Tiber flow
ouer the walles, if the riuer Nilus run
not ouer into the fieldes, if the heauen
ſtayed, and the earth moued, if there
were famine, or peſtilence, by and by
the Chriſtian was called out to be caſt
vnto the Lyon. Therefore the Church
of God hath alwayes in this worlde bin
called ſeditious, a troubler of the com-
mon peace, and the cauſe of all diſcom-
modities which light vpon the people.
But what can be ſurmised more vn-
juſt? For God hath ordeined kingdoms
and common-wealthes of this worlde,
chiefeſt of all for his church ſake, and
if there be any peace in this worlde, &
commeth through the bounteuſnes of
God, for the people of God his ſake.

Reie

Neither had this world endured thus long, if there were not a remnant out of this number of men yet now to be gathered vnto the people of god. Wherefore it is most vniust, that the cause of publike calamities is laid vpon the Church. For, in that the Iewes do vse their owne lawes, and that the people of God doth not follow the idolatrie of wicked kinges, it hath his iust and lawfull causes. For as concerning ciuill lawes, doubtlesse the Iewes in their captiuitie could not choise but alwaies obey those lawes, the which before the kinges and Princes did acknowledge, vnder whose power they were, vnles the kinges of their own accord did suffer, that some Iewes within them selues might vse their lawes of Moses. And as concerning religion, it was requisite and necessary that the people of God should rather obey God then me, and fly wicked Idolatrie, but what apperteineth this vnto the ciuill state of the Empire of Persia? The very Hea then them selues did not agree among them selues about religion, and euerye man had his seuerall goddes.

The people of God are not the cause of misery and trouble.

therefoze should it not be lawfull for the Iewes to acknowledge their God, whom they did know and proue to bee the true God, and the goddes of the heathen to be Devils: These felo of the accusation of Aman, which was the first part of his oration.

How finely Aman
cloketh
his enuie.

Marke me this also in the meane season, with how honest a cloke Aman doth couer his enuie. He doth not say: I enuie the Iewes, and therefore I desire that you would commaund them to be slaine, but he layeth a cloke of honestie ouer his enuy. I am careful, saith he for the publike peace, the which this people doth trouble, and for the preserving of the kinges authoritie, the which this people with their disobedience and priuate religion, do diminish, for the Angell of Satan is wont to chaunge him selfe into an Angell of light, for because that being in his owne likenes more foule, then that men would vouch safe to looke vpon him, he setteth forth him selfe to be scene in a faire shape, that he may be reuerently receiued, but we must not iudge according vnto the outward beauty of the shape, but according
vnto

the Booke of Ester:

unto the truth of the thing, for so that it
come to passe, that we be not beguiled
by Satan.

The latter part of Aman his ora-
tion conteineth a counsaile or exhorta-
tion. If it please you, saith he, make a
law that they may be destroyed. And
that hee may perswade this unto the
king, he setteth downe a double profite
that would grow therby. The one is
that the whole kingdome of Persia
shall become peaceable, safe, and quiet,
if the Jewes be destroyed, you know
very well, saith he, that it is not expedi-
ent for your kingdome, that it ware
proud and stubborne through too much
libertie. The other is, that great profite
shall come unto the kinges Exchequer,
for all the goods of banished and dam-
ned shall go into the Exchequer. I will
pay, saith he, ten thousand talents unto
the keepers of your treasure. This a-
mounteth unto the summe of thre score
hundredeth thousand crownes of gold as
they call them. And albeit this seemeth
in such sort to be spoken by Aman, that
so great a summe of money should come
into the kinges Exchequer of the goods

A counsaile or
exhortation.

An Exposition vpon

Iosephus.

of the Iewes condemned, yet Iosephus doth so expound it, as if Aman had promised out of his owne substance to paye so much monie vnto the king, that the tribute, which the Iewes pay, might be recompensed with this summe. But I will set downe the wordes of Iosephus: If you will, saith he, bestowe some benefite vpon your subiectes, commaund this nation vtterly to be rooted out, that no remnant of them be reserued, either vnto bondage, or vnto captiuitie. But yet, ô King, rather then you should susteine anye losse, I promise that I will pay their tribute out of mine owne substance, fortie thousand talents of money, wheresoeuer you shall commaund. And this money I willingly offer, onlie that your kingdome may be deliuered of these mischiefes.

Thus farre Iosephus, which setteth downe a far greater some of mony, then the booke of Ester in this place rehearseth, the which is rather, as I thinke, to be imputed vnto the negligence of the writers, then vnto the ignorance of Iosephus. But he doth manifestly shew that

that Aman promised that out of his owne goods he would recompense vnto the King, the tribute of the Iewes. But from whence should a man, albeit hee were a Prince, haue such great wealth. But howsoeuer it be, doubtlesse in Aman which was an instrument of the Deuill, is plainly shewed vnto vs, with what minde, and what artes the Deuill dooth persecute the Church of the Lord. For Satan, as Christ saith, is a lyar, and a murtherer. Wherefore hee is wont alwayes to persecute y^e Church with lying and murthering.

Aman an instrument of the de- uill.

You haue heard a lye before. There is a people, saith he, vsing new lawes, and ceremonies; and despicing the ordinances of the King, that is to say, it is an vngodly, hereticall, and seditious people. Nowe heare his murther. If it please you, saith hee, make a law, that they may be destroyed. And afterwards: That they might slay & roote out all the Iewes, from the childe vnto the old man, the litle ones and women all in one day. But albeit Satan haue alwayes raged against the Church of God with lying

Aman his lye.

Aman his mur- ther.

and murdering, and sometimes hath brought it into great daungers, yet he could neuer roote it out and destroy it. For it dooth consist in the seede of Abraham, that is, in Christ Iesus, who as he breaketh in peces the power of Satan, so he alwaies preserveth his church in safetie.

The qualities of
an enuious per-
son.

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But if any man alow the iudge-
ment of Iosephus, concerning Aman,
the which I recited euen now, he plain-
ly saeth, what is the nature of an enui-
cus, malicious and wrathful man. For
Aman had rather suffer great losse of
his goods, then not to reuenge himselfe
in most cruell maner vpon Mardoche-
us, and all the Iewes. For this is the
nature of an enuious man, that he will
be content with all his hart to haue but
one eye, one condition, that the partie
whom he enuieth, might lose both his
eyes, & become altogether blind. Which
affection or desire is not manlike, but
altogether deuilish, and therefore great
diligence is to be giuen, that it may bee
mortified & killed by the spirite. Marke
also in this place the vngodly liberali-
tie of Aman. He offereth in a maner all
his

Wicked libera-
lie.

his goods, to satisfie his lust, and to by-
holde wicked idolatry in the kingdome
of Persia, when as in the meane season
he would not haue offered one dookyn
for the furtherance of the true worshyp
of God. But if the former sense like you
better, according vnto the which Aman
sheweth the king, how great profit shal
come vnto the Kings treasures by the
good of the banished and condemned
Iewes, it is a most vniust, & most cruell
tyranny, to fill and enrich the Exchea-
quar with the swet of the poore, and op-
pression of the innocent. Neither can
it be that God will suffer such tyranny
vntreuenged. They haue not knowne,
saith the Lord, to doo the thing that
is right, treasuring vp iniquitie, and
the spoile of the poore in their hou-
ses. Therefore thus saith the Lorde
God: The land shall be vexed, and
compassed about, and thy strength
shall be pulled out of thee, and thy
houses shall be spoyled. And againe,
you haue eaten vp my vineyard, and
the spoile of the poore is in your
house. Therefore the Lord shall make
bale the head of the daughters of Sion,

Why God gi-
ueth power and
authoritie vnto
Princes and ru-
lers.

and the Lorde shall make bare their
haire. Last of all, this is to be conside-
red in Aman, how wickedly he abuseth
his dignitie and authoritie . For God
giueth power & authoritie vnto Prin-
ces , that with their trauell and seruice
they should helpe his Church . But A-
man abuseth his gifts against y^e church,
for he imployeth all his indeuour here
about, to oppresse the people of GOD.
But he falleth into the ditch, which hee
digged, and his sorrow is turned vpon
his owne pate , and his iniquitie com-
meth vpon his owne head . For the
Church is preserued, and he is hanged.
Therefore such as are endued with au-
thoritie, must be warned by this exam-
ple, that they imploy that which they
haue receiued from God, to further, and
not to destroy the Church of the Lord.

Cap. 3. v. 10. 11.

10

11

Therefore the King tooke his ring,
the which he vsed to weare, from his
hand, &c.] Aman not only obtained of
the king, y^e thing which he deserved, but
also found such fauour at his hand, that
the king gaue him al those goods, which
Aman promised that he would bring
into the Kings Exchequer of the goods
of

of the Jewes that were to be spoiled,
 or the which he promised to pay for the
 tribute. Now therefore Aman euer
 commeth, reioyseth, triumpheth. Now
 we see the wicked lifted vp and set aloft
 as the Cedars of Libanus. But stay a
 while. Him, whom we now see a con-
 querour and triumpher, the same a lit-
 tle while after we shall see hanging on
 the gallowes. We shall passe by, and
 beholde he shall not be, we shall seeke
 him, and his place shall not be founde.
 Wherefore we haue not to reioyse, whē
 as we see our wicked counsailes to pros-
 per, but then most of all we haue to
 feare the plague of God, and to repent,
 that we may escape the sodaine destruc-
 tion which hangeth ouer our heads.
 But here also consider me, how bloc-
 kish and sottish the King is. For by and
 by he yeldeth & graunteth vnto Aman,
 the cause being not yet tried & knowne,
 that the Jewes should be slaine. For he
 thinketh Aman to be a wise man, and
 one that loueth the publike peace, and
 the which is carefull for the Kings ma-
 iestie. Wherefore, the matter beeing not
 so much as once searched after, he yel-
 deth

An example of
 a blockish and
 sottish King.

Parties vn-
heard, not to be
condemned.

Wise mens coun-
sailes are not to
be receiued
without exami-
nation, how
they agree with
the truth.

deth vnto the mind of A man. But such vnconsideratenesse and want of discretion, as it is shamefull in all men, so in a King it is a most foule thing, & most vniust. For it is the chiefe office and duetie in a King, in iudgement not to condemne the parties accused being vnheard. But by this example wee are taught, that albeit wise men are to bee heard, yet we are not therefore to agree vnto their minde, because they are accounted wise, but for that they bring likely and iust causes of their mind. For we must not say, he sayd so, he is wiser then I. I will therefore doe, that which he counsaileth, but the reasons of wise men are to be examined, whither they be true, whither they be iust, whither the thing which they counsaile, be lawfull, godly, & agreeable with the word of the Lord. I will destroy, saith he, the wisdom of the wise, and cast away the vnderstanding of y prudent. Wherefore the counsailes of wise men according vnto the flesh, ought not in deede rashly to be condemned, yet we ought to suspect them, especially in matters pertaining vnto true saluation, that we
only

only giue so much vnto their sentences and iudgements, as the worde of the Lord doth allow vs.

And the Kings Scribes were called in the first moneth, &c.] The decrees are sent sealed with the Kings ring, into all Prouinces of the kingdom of Persia, that all the Jewes from the childe vnto the old man, litle ones and women, should be slaine in one day, and their goods spoyled. The copie of this decree is to be had among the writings which are called Apocrypha. And it is taken out of Iosephus, who after the maner of Historiographers did rather recite what in his iudgement the King might be likely to write in this case vnto his Prouinces, then what he wrote in deede. For the foireine writers of histories, are wont either to garnish the matter withall, or for to set forth their eloquence to feine Orations vnto persons, not such as they made, but such as by likelihood they might make. This kinde of Orations they call Exercises. Vnto this kinde also pertaineth the copie of the decree of Assuerus. And albe it that this copy doe simply commaund
that

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Cap. 3. verse. 12.
13. 14.

23

An Exposition vpon

that the Jewes should be slaine in one day, such as Aman should appoint, yet when as the letters are written and dated in the first moneth, and the day of the slaughter is set down in the twelfth moneth, so that there is almost a whole yeare betwene the setting forth of the decree, and the time of the slaughter of the Jewes, it is most likely, that the King commaunded, that within this space all the Jewes should forsake the law and their religion, and follow the goddesses of the Persians. So that if any did not do this before the thirteenth day of the twelfth moneth, and did not obey the kings commandement, then they should be counted prescribed, that is giuen ouer to be spoyled, and murdered, in what place soeuer they were taken. But whatsoeuer were the condition of the kings edict and decree, doubtlesse most great daunger did hang ouer the head of the whole Church in the kingdom of Persia. For what is there now which doth not threaten great destruction vnto it? The king hath giuen his consent. The letters of the decrees are sealed with the kings ring. The messengers

The Church of
God in Persia
in very great
danger.

engers carry the letters into euery
Prorince of the Empire. That which
the king had decreed and commanded,
no noble man can call backe. And the
power of the king was greater, then
that the Jewes if they were all gathe-
red together in one place, were able to
withstand.

What then is left, but onely most cer-
taine death: But it is well. There is a
God in heauen, whose hand is not so
shortened by any power or wisdom of
man, so that he cannot helpe, like as al-
so in this most great daunger hee dooth
deliuer his Church. Wherefore, whether
Princes do decree, or write, or seale let-
ters with their ringes, or command, or
send out messengers against the church,
we must fly vnto the Lord our God, and
hope well of the helpe of God, who, whe-
as hee hath promised that hee will saue
his Church, there is no man that can
breake his decree, or turne away his
hand being stretched out to send helpe.

A singular com-
fort.

The postes made hast, &c. These
are the maners of this world. For men
are most quicke and readie at an inch

25
The maners of
this world.

(as they say) for to oppresse the church,
and to erecute the wicked commande-
ments of Princes. But for to preserve
the Church, and to exercise godlines,
they are of all others the most slow and
slacke. And yet this onely ought to bee
our worke, our trauell, that we should
follow godlines with all the hast and o-
bedience we could.

15
Cap. 3. ver. 15.

The King and Aman making a
feast, &c.] This is inst that, which af-
terwardes Christ said vnto his little
Church, vnto his Disciples: Verely, ve-
rely I say vnto you, ye shal weepe and
lament, but contrarywise the worlde
shall reioice, and ye shall sorrow. But
there is added: your sorrow shall bee
turned into ioy. For as in the passion
of Christ, the priestes triumph, the foul-
dars mocke, but Christ is hanged on
the Crosse, and most miserably vered:
so the wicked, when as the godly doe
mourne, are in greatest ioy. For they
thinke their selues then to be happye,
when as the Church is in miserie, and
they thinke that God doth then most of
all iudge rightly, and cleanse the worlde,
when as the godly are in treuble, and

do seeme to perish. The time commeth
saith Christ, that whosoever killeth you
shall thinke that he doth God good ser-
uice. Therefore also the people of God
being in daunger, Assuerus and Aman
do merely banquet, as if the matter
went very well and most happily. But
that is most true which is written in
Job: The prayse of the vngodly shall
be but short, and the ioy of the Hypo-
crites as it were but a moment. If his
pride go vp euen vnto heauen, and
his head touch the cloudes, he shall in
the end be destroyed like a dunghil, and
they which saw him shall say: where is
he?

The ioy of the
wicked shall be
turned into sor-
row.

The fourth Chapter.

V V High thinges when as
Mardocheus heard, hee
rent his clothes, &c.]

We ought not
to be careless in
troubles.

This chapter conteineth
the most troublesome part of this histo-
rie. For Mardocheus, and the rest of
the Iewes vnderstand the sentence of
the most cruell decrees which was orde-
ned and proclaimed against the church

of

of the Lord. What therefore on the other side do the Jewes take in hand to doe? First of all, they sleepe not in sloth, neither thinke negligently of the danger at hand. For whē as the holy Ghost willeth vs in all aduersitie and trouble to trust in the Lord, it doth not will vs to be sluggish, careles, and slothful. For the trust in the Lord is working and painefull, stirring vp all the powers & members of man to serue it. Esaias in deede saith: your strength shall bee in silence and hope: but in this saying he doth not bidde vs be idle, or to take no aduice, or to go about no iust and lawfull worke, but he willeth vs not to trust vnto the deuises of man, or vnto our owne endeouours. Furthermore the Jewes being in a most great danger, do not cast forth railing speches against the king, nor take armour vpon them. For the king at this time was their lawfull magistrate, and they were the seruants of the king, hauing no authoritie to vse the sword, the which albeit they had had, yet were they in number farre more few, then that they were by force able to withstand so mightie a king

The Jewes neither raile, nor rebell ag ainst the King.

king and monarch. Wherefore it was neither lawfull for them, nor possible, to take armes against the king. What do they then? Mardocheus and the rest of the Jewes do rent their clothes, put on sackcloth, straw dust vpon their heads, sigh, weepe, and fast. These thinges, albeit in some respectes they seeme to be the tokens of madde men, and such as are out of their wittes, yet that, which the Jewes do, is not madness, but sorrow, is not a phrensilike want of wit, but a lawfull and vsuall declaring of the sorrow of their mind. For it was a customable thing among the Jewes, that in sodaine and feareful calamities and distresses, they did declare their sorrow by renting of their garments, and did humble them selues to call for helpe at the hands of God, by putting on of sackcloth, casting of ashes and fasting. For the godly Jewes did not thinke that by sackcloth, ashes, and absteyning from meat they did cleanse their sinnes, and deserue the grace of God, but they vsed their ceremonies, to witnes vnto all men, that they mourned, and that by fasting they might bee

the

The practise of
the Jewes in
distresse and
trouble.

the more and more earnest in praying
and calling for helpe at the hand of
God.

Wherefore these maners are no
signes that the Iewes in Persia are
madde, but they are tokens that they
fly vnto God, and when as there appear
eth no helpe on earth, that they seeke
for helpe from heauen. This no doubt
is to offer an acceptable sacrifice vnto
God. There are in deede set out in the
law the sacrifices of Bulles and of
Calues, but these sacrifices are onely a
certaine shadow, and holy preparation
for the true sacrifice, is first of all the
seed of Abraham, that is, Iesus Christ
the onely begotten sonne of God, who
offered him selfe vp vnto death for the
cleansing of our sinnes. Secondly, sa-
crifices, are afflictions, which are offered
vp of vs by prayer in the sight of God,
and that through faith in Christ. A sa-
crifice, saith he, vnto God is a trou-
bled spirite, a brused and humbled
hart, O God wilt thou not refuse,
And Esayas: vnto whom shall I looke
but vnto the poore soule, and brused
in spirite, & trembling at my words?

And

A troubled spi-
rite and hum-
bled hart.

the Booke of Ester.

And now the Jewes are most miserably troubled, are altogether of a bruised spirite, the which in their prayers and cries they offer up vnto God, and desire, that for as much as God hath promised helpe and blessing vnto them for the sake of Abraham, he would mercifully saue them in those most great dangers, which did threaten destruction vnto the whole nation. Wherefore they do vnto God a most acceptable seruice, & offer vnto him a most acceptable sacrifice. By this example wee also are taught, when affliction and trouble is sent vnto vs, we should then think that God setteth before vs fatte Bulles and Calues, the which we should offer vp vnto him, that which shall be done, if in prayer, we offer vp vnto God the afflictions and troubles which we suffer, and call vpon the name of the Lord by faith, that he would saue vs, not for our righteousness, but for Iesus Christ his sake our Lord.

And with this crime going euen vnto the gates of the Palace, &c,] Mardocheus taketh & keepeth a right and lawfull course, in dealing in this

What we are to
learne by this
example.

An Exposition vpon

most hard busines. For first of all he calleth for helpe at the hand of God. Afterwards when he hath called vpon the name of God, he hasteth vnto the kings court, to declare vnto Quene Ester his daughter, in howe great daunger the whole Church standeth, if it may be by any meanes, that a way may be found, wherby the desperate estate in a maner of the Iewes may be holpen. For after that we haue called vpon the name of God by faith, in daungers, all iust, godly, and lawfull meanes, of men, so farre as may be, are to be taken, that we may be saued. We must do nothing vnlawfully. For if there be no other way to escape but by iniustice, and vngodlines, we must much rather suffer the present daunger, then commit vngodlines. For it had not bene lawfull for the Iewes to moue sedition against the king, or for to destroy the king and Aman with poison. These things are vnlawfull: but that the Quene, should make sute vnto the king for her innocent and guiltlesse people, it was a thing most lawfull and iust. Wherefore godly Mardocheus, setting aside all vniust waies of seeking

After calling
on the name of
God, mans
meanes are not
to be forsaken.

The vse of this
example.

king helpe, hasteth vnto that, which was lawfull. By which example wee are taught, in the auoyding or escaping of daungers, to follow only godlinesse and righteousnesse, least through our vnlawfull dealing we rather encrease then escape danger. For Salomon saith: That which the vngodly man feareth, happeneth vnto him.

For it was not lawfull for one wearing sackcloth, &c.] Sackcloth was the habit and apparell of men in trouble and mourning. But in the courtes of Princes, and as Christ speaketh, in the houses of Kinges are those which weare soft apparell, & giue themselves vnto nicenesse. And amongst the courts of Princes, the court of Persia in especiall was sometimes infamous, for that the Kinges of the Persians laboured only herein, to giue themselves vnto pleasure. Xenophon saith: The seruants of the King of Persia goe about all the world, to seeke out for the King pleasant and sweete drinke. There are innumerable persons which de- uise, that the King may haue most delicate and deintie meates. And a

2
Cap. 4. verse 21

An infamy of
the court of
Persia.

An Exposition vpon

Mourners not
suffered to
come into the
court of Persia.

man can not easily tel, what arte and cunning they vse, to make him sleepe well. We haue also shewed befoze, with how singular care the maydens were prepared for the Kings pleasure. In as much therefore as in the court of Persia there was such great care and study for deintinesse and pleasure, it is no maruell, that those were not suffered to come into it, which by their apparrell did professe mourning and sorrow. But marke me I pray you, the euerswift course of things. The courts of Princes were ordeined by God to this end, that they might be as it were Sanctuaries for miserable and afflicted persons, for Kingdomes and Empires were ordeined vpon earth, that the miserable might be holpen, and the innocent defended. But now in y^e court of Persia, nothing is counted more hatefull and abhorrible then afflicted persons and such as by their apparrell do testifie their mourning. What is more vniust then this peruersenesse of things? But yet now the matter goeth well inough. Miserable and afflicted persons haue no place in the court of Persia befoze the King,
but

but they haue a verie great and large place in the court of heauen with our Lozde God. For heauen standeth alwayes open vnto them that mourne, and God is alwayes ready at hand vnto y^e afflicted, which call vpon his name by fayty. Call vpon me, saith he, in the day of thy trouble, and I will deliuer thee, and thou shalt honour me. Wherefore albeit that in our mourning we be shut out of the courtes of Bizinces, yet the court of heauen receiveth vs, into the which it is lawfull alwayes to enter by godly prayers.

Which thing when she heard, shee was dismayed, and sent apparell, that doing off his sackcloth, &c.] Ester sendeth vnto her vncle Mardocheus, courtly apparell. But Mardocheus asketh not apparell, but helpe. And therefore he sheweth the Quene Ester by a Chamberlaine, how great perill the Jewes are in, and willet her to go vnto the king, and to sue for the most miserable Israelites. But Ester alleageth the publike ordinance of the kingdome of Persia, that it is a matter of death for one to go vnto the king not being cal-

4
Cap. 4. ver. 4. &c

An Exposition vpon

led for. Whither it be man, or woman
saith shee, that entereth into the inner
court of the King, not being called, by
sentence alreadie set downe, he is to bee
put to death, vnlesse the King stretch
out vnto him his golden Scepter. For
the Persians did thinke it to apperteine
vnto preserving and encreasing the ma-
iestie of the King, that the King should
be seene very sildome, and as Xenophō
sayth, should be hard to be comen vnto.
Therefore the person of the King was
hidden, as some holy mysterie, and it
was ordeined, that whosoever came vn-
to him not being called, should be iud-
ged as one that had committed treason,
and by and by be put to death, vnles the
King would mercifully saue him, by
holding out his Scepter. This custome
Xenophō findeth fault withall, & prai-
seth Agesilaus, the King of the Lacedæ-
monians, for that he had rather be seene
often abroad, and that all might haue
accesse vnto him, then to be hidden, and
hard to be comen vnto. For darkenesse
is beſeeming one that doth vnonestly,
but the light bringeth an ornament and
garnishing vnto an honest life. But the
dustie

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The Kings of
the Persians
hard to come
vnto.

Agesilaus.

duetie of a Prince is, to heare the causes of poore men, and to defende the oppressed. And how should he heare, if that the poore man may at no hand come vnto him? Wherefore this custome of the Persians was flat against the lawfull duetie of a King. And it had besides, manifest discommodities. For Camby- ses being dead, the Magi, or wise men thzough occasion of this custome got the Empire of Persia, and were authours of great tumults and vproares.

The custome of the Persians re- prehended.

Thinke not that thou shalt saue thine owne soule only, because thou art in the Kings house, &c.] An Ora- tion worthe the remembrance, full of fayth and grauitie, wherewith Mardocheus refuteth the obiections of Queen Ester, and encourageth her making stay, that shee should take vpon her the care of the publike safetie of the Iewes. For first of all, he refuteth her opinion, whereby peraduenture that she should escape this daunger of the Iewes, because she is Queene. Thinke not, saith he, with thy selfe, that thou onely shalt saue thine owne life, because thou hast an high place in the Kings court. For

Cap. 4. v. 13. 14.

13

Mardocheus re- futeth the opi- nion of the Queene.

An Exposition vpon

it is most certaine that God will save his people, and deliuer them out of this danger. Call vnto thy minde the promise, whereby God hath promised that hee will defende the posteritie of Abraham. I will make, saith God vnto Abraham, my couenant between thee and me, and betweene thy seede after thee in their generations with an euerlasting couenant, that I may bee thy God, and the God of thy seede after thee. And againe: When they were in the land of their enemies, I did not altogether cast them off, neither did I so despise them, that they were consumed, and that I would make voide my couenant with them. For I am the Lord their God, and I will call to remembrance mine olde couenant. Recken vp also the examples, whereby God oftentimes hath approved the truth of his promises, and defended his people in most great and dangerous perils. What can be tolde more cruell, then that Pharaos commaunded, that all the male kinde that should be borne among the Israelites, should be cast into the riuer, and yet notwithstanding:

The infants of
the Israelites in
Egypt.

notwithstanding God did maruellous-
ly preserue our forefathers. I could re-
hearie many more examples, by the
which it is most manifest, that the grea-
ter that the dangers are, so much the
more ready the helpe of God is. Where-
fore nothing is more certaine, then that
God euen in this time, wil preserue his
Church, in the monarchy and kingdom
of Persia. You haue an excellent, and in-
deed a noble sayth in Mardocheus, by
the which in most present and daunge-
rous peril, he seeth deliuerance to come.
And this is that which he saith: The
Jewes shall be deliuered by some other
occasion.

Now heare his great threathninges.
If thou now hold thy tong, saith hee,
thou and thy fathers house shall be de-
stroyed. For the Church of God is now
in most great daunger, and lieth vnto
thee for helpe. Wherefore, if either for
feare of thine owne priuate daunger, or
of contempt, thou shalt forsake it, thou
and all thy posteritie shal most certai-
nly be destroyed. For albeit the Prince
ly maiestie, wherewith thou art indu-
ed, be likely to deliuer thee from the pre-
sent

14
The threathnings
of Mardocheus.

An Exposition vpon

God greatly de-
testeth such as
being able, will
not helpe his
Church.

sent destruction of the Iewes, and to set thee in safetie, yet God in heauen will not leaue it vnreuedged, if thou now forsake his Church. For as it is a seruice most acceptable vnto God, according to our power to helpe his Church, so God doth hate nothing more, then if a man, when the Church is in danger, shew not that helpe vnto the Church, which he may and is able. It is sayde vnto Abraham, I will blesse them that blesse thee, and curse them that curse thee. This was sayde vnto Abraham, not for Abraham his sake alone, but also for the Church sake, whereof Abraham was a chiefe Patriarch. For he that blesseth, that is, he that wisheth well and doth well vnto the Church, vnto him also doth God well. But he that curseth, that is, he that wisheth ill, and he that doth ill vnto the Church, and despiseth and forsaketh it, when as he might helpe it, he also shall be cursed of God. And in the ten Commaundements: I am the Lord thy God, strong, gracious, visiting the sinnes of the fathers, vpon the children, vnto the third and fourth generation of them that hate

me.

the Booke of Ester.

me. And it is a very great iniquitie and crueltie, to refuse and despise the people of God in their miserie crying for our helpe. The Lord saith vnto Ely the high priest: Whosoever shall honour me, I will glorifie him. But those that despise me, shall come to shame and be vnnoble.

Now they honour God, which helpe his Church. And they despise God, which despise his Church, and do not redresse the misery of the same by all the meanes they can. In the Proverbs it is said: He that shutteth his eare at the cry of the poore, he also shall cry, and shall not be heard. If the cry of one poore body be of so great an account, that being not hard by man, it doth shut vp the eare of God, that hee will not heare, what shall the cry of the whole Church be, in her affliction seeking help at his hand, whom shee hopeth to be able to helpe? Wherefore thou O Queene Ester, if thou shalt now slacke, & turne away thy selfe from the Church, in this most dangerous time, the Lord our God also shall turne away his face from thee, and from all thy family and posterity.

Not to helpe
the Church, it
to despise God.

An Exposition vpon

A worthy note.

ritie. Therefore if thou wilt saue thy selfe and thy posteritie, imploy all the trauaile thou canst, to saue the church. It is worth the noting, which Mardocheus teacheth in this place. God alwaies publikely preserueth his church, and priuately euery one in affliction, that calleth on his name by faith. And hee setteth forth vnto vs as well his church, as the afflicted to be holpen in their misery and distresse, not that hee either will not, or can not helpe, but to haue vs his fellow workers, and to make pꝛoofe of our godlines, and in the afflicted and miserable to lay downe before vs our owne either deliuerance or destruction. For if wee reach out helpe vnto the miserable, such as we are able, ours is safety and deliuerance. But if we neglect them or despise them, God doubtlesse will not forsake them that are in misery trusting in him, but vnto vs most certaine destruction is nere at hand. This is one reason, wherewith Mardocheus refuteth either the opinion or obiection of Ester, & in the meane season also exhorteth her, to helpe the church in affliction and trouble. And
the

the reason of this exhortation is drawn from profite, or from necessitie. Thou must needes shew helpe vnto the people of God. For except thou according vnto thy power shalt helpe them, thou thy selfe canst not be saued.

Secondly Mardocheus refuteth an other obiection or excuse, the which Quene Ester alleaged as a cloke for her stay making, namely a lawe of the Persians, that it was a matter of death for one vncalled to come vnto the king, who knoweth, saith he, if peradventure thou camest vnto the kingdome for this purpose. These are not wordes of doubting, but of most certain affirming and auouching. In Joel it is said, who knoweth, if he will be turned, and forgive, and leaue behind him a blessing, that is, there is nothing more certaine, then that God will blesse vs, if we turn vnto him. So also in this place, who knoweth, saith Mardocheus, if peradventure thou camest vnto the kingdom for this purpose, that is, I doubt not, but that God hath aduanced thee vnto royall and princely maiestie, that in this most dangerous time thou shouldest

An other obiection confuted by Mardocheus.

An Exposition vpon

That all in au-
thoritie would
duely regard
this.

shouldest helpe the most miserable peo-
ple of God. I see in deede that there is
likely to ensue vnto thee some daunger
by the Persian law, if thou go vnto the
king vncalled for, but thou oughtest
to haue more regard of the publike
daunger, then of thine owne priuate
daunger, and thou oughtest more to
take heede of the greater and certaine
daunger, then of the lesse and vncertain
daunger. For if thou make stay, or for-
slow the safetie of the church: there han-
geth ouer thee and ouer thy house most
certaine destruction, because thou haste
shut thine ears at the cry of the most
miserable people of God. But if thou go
in vnto the king vncalled for, and make
sute for the people of God, thou shalt in
deede put thy selfe in daunger of death,
but in such a daunger, as is vncertaine.
For peraduenture the king will holde
out vnto thee his golden scepter, and
thou shalt be saued. And I doubt not,
but if thou do thy duetie, God will giue
most happy successe. Moreover the law
of the Persians, by the which they that
are not called, are forbidden to come vn-
to the king is an ordinance and ap-
point-

pointment of man. But that thou shouldest sue for the deliuey of the people of God, is the calling of God. For it is most certaine, that thou wast therefore chosen Queene by God; that by thy meanes the people of God might be saued in this daunger. And thou oughtest rather to obey the calling of God, then the ordinances of men. Wherefore my most deare daughter, bee couragious, breake the law of man, that thou maist obey the law of God. He that hath wonderfully called thee vnto the kingdome, he also wil wonderfully moue the right hand of the king, yea although he should refuse the same, that hee should stretch out his golden scepter vnto thee, and that thou maist be saued. This is another reason, wherewith Mardocheus doth refute the obiection of Ester and encourage her, to take vpon her the care of the people of God, And this reason is taken from that which is honest and commendable. For he putteth Ester in mind of her duetie, vnto the which she was called by God, when as shee was chosen to be Queene. And it teacheth vs, that God bestoweth vpon

The law of God is to be obserued before the law of man.

God giuerh magnifies vnto men for the benefice of his church.

Princes, power, vpon rich men, welth,
vpon wise men, wisdom, and vpon o-
thers other giftes, not that they should
abuse them according vnto their plea-
sure, but that they shoulde helpe the
church of God, and defend the same by
all the meanes they can. For the church
vpon earth is so deare in the eyes of
God, that he requireth of all men, to
serue his Church. That nation, saith
he, and kingdome which will not serue
thee, shall perish, and the Gentiles shall
be laid wast.

Another very
necessary lesson.

Also Mardocheus in this place
doth teach, that we ought not to leaue
the calling of God for the ordinances of
men, but that if both of them can not
be kept together and at once, that then
the ordinances of men are to be broken,
that we do not breake the calling of
God.

Cap. 4. ver. 15.
16, 17.
The singular
godlines of
Ester.

Againe Ester gaue Mardocheus
these wordes in charge, go and call
together &c.] See the excellent godli-
nes of a woman, and such as can neuer
be inough commended. For being stir-
red vp and inflamed with the exhorta-
tion of Mardocheus she taketh vpon
her

4 639
the Booke of Ester.

her the care of the Church, and doth rather put her selfe in daunger of death, then forsake the people of God in so great perill. I wil go in, saith she, vnto the king vncalled, doing against the law, and giuing my self vnto death and daunger. But marke me here with what wisdom of faith shee taketh in hand this busines.

26
Shee doth not by and by breake through the wardes of the court violently, but willethe the people of God to fast and promiseth that she and her maidens will fast. What meaneth this? Doth Ester then thinke by the merit of fasting to obtaine the grace of God? Doth she hope that God will saue her people for her fasting sake? No not so. But shee obserueth the custome of her countrey, according vnto the which the Israelites in great and hard daungers were wont to ordaine and proclaime a publike fast, not that by the desert of fasting they might cleanse their sinnes, as Hypocrites do abuse fasting, but that by the ceremonie of fasting they might be put in mind of the greatnes of the daunger, and that they might soberlie

The true vse of fasting.

An Exposition vpon

Iosaphat.

The Ninuities.

A sureway to
escape daunger
or else patient-
ly to suffer it.

meet together and continue in prayer
vnto our Lord God. For Ester her selfe
doth interpret fasting after this ma-
ner. Pray ye, saying, for me. So Iosa-
phat doth ordaine a publike fast, when
as the enimies vpon the sodaine had
broken in into the borders of his king-
dome. And he ordeined it, not to the end
that by the merite of this worke hee
might bring him selfe into fauour with
God, but as the Scripture saith, that he
might wholly giue him selfe to praye
vnto the Lord. So the ninuities ordein
a fast, not to cleanse their sinnes with
this worke, but to cry vnto the Lord in
strength (for so the Scripture speaketh)
and that euery one might turne from
his euill way. Wherefore Ester in or-
deining a fast, did not follow the super-
stition of Hypocrites, but obserued the
godly custome of her foresathers, to keep
the people in the duetie of prayer. And
there is no more sure way both to suf-
fer and also to escape daunger, then by
godly prayers to fly vnto the Lord,
who when as he hath said: call vpon me
in the day of thy trouble, and I will
deliuer thee, and thou shalt honour me,
he

the Booke of Ester.

he can not be holden nor letted, but that he will saue him that calleth vpon him by fayth, for Christ his sake, in all his afflictions and troubles.

Now the prayers which Mardocheus seemeth to haue vsed among the Jewes, and Ester among her maydes, are to be founde among the Apocrypha writings, & are to be reckoned in y^e number of those, the which for exercise sake, are by the louers of godlinesse, feyned vnto persons. And as concerning the prayer of Mardocheus, we haue before spoken somewhat. For albeit it be likely y^e Mardocheus was greatly tempted and troubled, for that through his fault he brought y^e Jewes into so great danger, for because he did not reuerence Aman, yet the prayer woulde seeme much fitter, if in stead of that which is sayd: I feared least I should giue mine honour vnto man, and least I should worship any, except God, there had been set downe: I feared, least I should blesse him, whom thou hadst cursed, & least I shuld reuerence him, whom thou long agoe hadst iudged vnworthie of reuerence. And the prayer of

With what favourable interpretation the Apocrypha prayers of Mardocheus and Ester, may be tolerated & borne with.

An Exposition vpon

Ester is after some tolerable sort feined, if so be that you vnderstand her, when she sayth: I detest the bed of the vncircumcised, not to thinke, that shee dooth sinne against God by her marriage, which she made with a man vncircumcised, but that in these wordes she signifieth only, that she had so great a desire for the safetie of her people, that shee had rather with the safetie of her country be married vnto one of y^e meanest of her Citizens circumcised according vnto the lawe, and following the true worship of God: then in banishment, vnto so mightie a King, both vncircumcised, and a worshipper of idols. For Ester did not sin in marrying vnto an vncircumcised King; but she yielded vnto necessitie, in such a case, the which of it selfe, in banishment, was not vnlawfull.

The fift Chapter.

Cap. 5. verse 1.

ANd the third day, Ester put on her royall apparell, &c. After that Ester had prayed vnto God, being decked with her royall
all

all apparell, she goeth vnto the King. And vnto vs which know the successe of the thing, her iourney seemeth not to haue bene hard or dangerous, but if you haue regard vnto that tunc, in the which she tooke vpon her this iourney, she seemed vnto her selfe to go vnto present death, neither could she haue any hope of life, but by faith in the Lorde. For it was a matter of death, for one not called, to come into the court vnto the King. And in the yeares before Queene Vasthi, albeit she were a most beautifull woman, and dearely beloued of the King, yet she was diuorced for a fault not so great. More then this, Ester had not bene called vnto the King in thirtie dayes before, wherevpon they might suspect, that not only the Jewes, but also she her selfe comming of the Jewes stocke, to be appointed by the King to be slaine. Wherefore as concerning the circumstances of the thing, the going of Ester vnto the King, seemed nothing els then a going vnto present death. And yet she goeth forward, and taketh so great danger vpon her for the Church sake. This is in deed a no-

the iourney of Ester full of danger.

a Princely courage in Ester.

a token of noble faith.

Abraham.

Moses.

Jeremie.

ble or Princely courage whereby Ester declareth, as well her excellent faith towards God, as her singular loue towards the Church of God. It is a token of faith, that she aduentureth the hazard of her life to obey the calling of God. For albeit all circumstances of the matter did threaten destruction vnto her, yet by her faith did she stay vpon the promises of God. For whom God doth call and leade into daunger, vnto him also doth he promise preservation and deliuerance in daungers. He saith to Abraham: Go out of thy land, and from thy kinred. This is to call vnto dangers. But he setteth downe a promise: I will make thee vnto a great nation, and will blesse thee. He saith vnto Moses: Come, I will sende thee vnto Pharaos, to leade out my people from the lande of Egypt. This is to sende vnto dangers, but there is a promise put vnto it: I will be with thee. It is sayd vnto Jeremie: I haue giuen or made thee a Prophet among nations. This is to call vnto dangers, but there is added a promise: Be not afraid of their faces, because I am with thee to

To deliuer thee, saith the Lord. Wherefore when as Ester was called by God vnto dangers, she also most constantly and stedfastly beleueth, that deliuerance and safetie is promised vnto her by God.

And it is a token of loue, that she layeth downe her life for the Church of God, and hath rather put her selfe in hazard of her life, then to forsake the Church of God in dangers. Such loue no doubt Christ requireth at the hande of euery godly person. This, saith he, is my commandement, that yee loue one another, as I haue loued you. No man hath greater loue then this, that a man lay downe his life for his friendes, &c. In the meane season, marke also the modestie of Ester, for being aduantaged vnto royall maiestie, she doth not disdain her kinsmen, most miserable persons, and most abiect, but doth so far debase her selfe, that she putteth euen her owne life in daunger for them. It is a straunge thing to see, how far other men, the greater dignitie they haue obtained aboue others, are wide from this modestie. For these for the

A token of loue.

The modestie of Ester.

Many the higher they grow in promotion, the more proude they are.

most part are inflamed with so great pride, that in comparison of themselves they disdain all men, euen their friends which sometimes were most deare vnto them. But we ought to haue in remembrance that saying, which is in the Epistle of Peter: God doth withstand the proude, and giueth grace vnto the lowly:

Cap. 5. ver. 1. 3.

And when as he saw Queene Ester standing, she pleased in his eyes, &c.] Iosephus and the Apocryph writing of Ester, do say that the king at the first looked vpon the Queene with a grim and fierce countenaunce, and that the Queene was so amazed, that she was almost dead for feare. But that heart of the king was chaunged vpon the so- daine, and that he did not only reach out his golden Scepter to the Queene, but also held her in his armes, vntil she came vnto her selfe againe. Howsoever this be, doubtlesse the king enter- teineth the Queene Ester with such fa- uour, that he promiseth her the halfe of his kingdome, if she wil require it. And that this kinde of promise was vsuall vnto kings, if at any time they were minded

minde to shew vnto any man great fauour, the example also of Herod death witnesse, which promised vnto the dancing mayde, that he woulde giue her whatsoeuer she would aske, euen vnto the one halfe of his kingdome. I pray you therefore, how did Ester finde so great fauour with the King? Some man peradventure would say, that her beautie and comelinesse was cause of the Kings fauour. But Vasthi was beautifull as well as she, and yet diuorced. Wherefore let vs search out the cause not in the bodie of Ester, but in heauen with our Lord God. For her when as he fauoured the Queen Ester, of his free mercy brought to passe, that the King also should fauour her. For it is no maruell, that he whom God, on whom not only men, but also all other creatures doe depende, embraceth with his fauour, is also in fauour among men. But in this place consider me how happy successe those businesse haue, the which a man taketh in hande to doe by fayth and godly prayers. Ester taketh not in hande this matter, but hauing first made prayer, as well her selfe, as

It was God, and not the beautie of Ester, the which procured her fauour.

also

An Exposition vpon

also the rest of all the Iewes in Susis. For prayers bring vnto minde the promises of God: by the promises of God fayth is kindled and inflamed. And vnto fayth the blessing of God can not bee wanting. And vnto him that beleueth all things are possible. Wherefore nothing is to be taken in hand without godly prayers, that God may prosper the businesse that we go about.

How women
may attaine vnto
rule ouer
their husbands.

Neither is this to be ouerpasse, that Ester here by her example teacheth a true and a lawfull way, wherby wiues may get a rule bearing ouer their husbands, which is not vnlawfull. For the King before would not be vnder y rule of a woman, and therefore he put away the Queene Vasthi. But now he suffereth the Queene Ester to haue so great rule ouer him, that as if he were her prisoner, he promisseth vnto her the one halfe of his kingdome. How did the Queene Ester wyng this from so mightie a King? Doubtlesse, not by foule wordes, not by contempt, not by disdayne, not by brawling, not by chydng, not by lewde demeanour. For by these maners women are wont

woont rather to carry away blowes and stripes then rule and maistrie. But by godlines towarde God, reuerence towarde their husbandes, chastitie, patience, and other commendable vertues. For thus women by seruing and obeying do rule; by which waye onely the rule bearing of women is lawfull. Of the which also Peter writeth: saying, Women be subiect vnto your husbandes, that they also which obey not the word may be won without the word, by the conuersation of the wiues, when as they consider your chaste conuersation coupled with reuerence, &c.

He meaneth that by the feare of God, and obedience they obtaine of their husbandes their lawfull requestes.

If it please the King, I pray that thou come vnto me to day, and Aman with thee, &c.] Ester biddeth the king vnto a feast. For the most wise woman doth not by and by open the affection of her mind, but seeketh a fit occasion at the feast, when as the king is pleasant and merrie. For this is a common saying: vnto the Prince speake either not at all, or those thinges that are most pleasant. And Ester biddeth Aman also vnto her feast, to accuse him before his face. This is great honesty in Ester.

Cap. 3. ver. 5. 6.

4

Shee

A notable point
of honest dea-
ling.
Teltales.

Shee will not accuse Aman priuily but to the king, but in his owne presence, befoze Aman his face. Backebiters, and Teltales are most farre from this vertue, who are wont priuilie to accuse men, that the partie accused should haue no place and libertie to excuse or defend him selfe. This is altogether diuelish. And therfoze Satan also is called Diabolus, that is an accuser, for that hee doth accuse the godly in the sight of god, day and night, &c.

Cap. 5. ver.
7. 8.

My petition and my request is this, &c.] The Quene biddeth the King and Aman the second time vnto her feast, that shee might more fitly aske that thing, the which shee meant to aske.

Mardocheus
will by no
meanes do reue-
rence vnto A-
man.

And when he sawe Mardocheus sitting before the gates of the Pallace &c.] Mardocheus yet continueth in his purpose, and doth no reuerence vnto the Amalechite, albeit the decree of the king concerning the slaughter of the Iewes be published. To what ende therfoze doth he it? For if he had done reuerence vnto Aman, peraduenture the mind of Aman woulde haue bene chaunged

chaunged into loue, and he would haue laboured, that the decree of the king might either haue bene called backe, or mitigated and abated. But Mardocheus did thinke it vnlawfull, to honour him, whom God had cursed, as we haue shewed before. And he would not escape daungers by vniust dealing, or vngodlines, but gaue him selfe vnto godlines. For he did know that daungers were not auoided, but encreased by iniquitie. Wherefore he remained stedfast in his purpose, and did not so much as moue himselfe from his seate before Aman.

Aman returning vnto his house, calleth vnto him his frendes, &c.]

Aman being bidden by the Quene vnto the feast, is most ioyfull and voide of care. There is one only thing the which doth graue him, to wit, that he is despised of a Ieloe. Therefore he calleth an assembly of his frends, and of his wife, in the which is decreed by the counsaile of his wife, that Mardocheus shoulde be hanged on the gallowes. And so, saith his wife, thou shalt go merily with the king vnto the banquet. Here first of all

con-

Cap. 3. ver. 10.

&c.

10

the weakenes
and impatiency
of mind in A-
man.

consider againe the weakenes of minde
in Aman. When as I haue all these
things, saith he, I thinke my selfe to
haue nothing, so long as I see Mardo-
cheus the Jewe sitting before the kings
gates. Vee which next vnto the king
had the greatest dignitie of all others
in the Empire of Persia, cannot pati-
ently beare the contempt of one poore
Jewe. What is moze womanish then
this mind?

Ouerthwart
counsaile.

Further note the ouerthwart coun-
sailes of his friends and wife. Aman
was set on fire with anger against
Mardocheus. Therefore it had beene
the part of his wife and friends rather
to queuch his anger then to kindle it.
But now they put oyle into the fire.
And him whom through their ouer-
thwart and vngodly counsaile they stu-
died to honoz, him they do bring in
to great reproch and shame. Aman
was after ward hanged on the same
gallowes, the which they had prepared
for Mardocheus. This example is to
this end laid downe before vs, that wee
should learne to giue Godly and hole-
some counsaile vnto our friends, least
that

a good lesson
for all that are
to giue coun-
saile, but espe-
cially for such
as be about Prin-
ces and great
men.

that in seruing their humours, we encrease and not take away mischiefes.

Last of all consider in Aman the wonderfull, and marueilous iudgements of God. For wicked Aman is most merry and void of care, for the preserving and increasing of his dignitie and power, and also most sure (as hee thinketh) of the death of Mardocheus, whom he hated. But marke me the falling out and issue of the matter. Wicked and reachles Aman shall perish with sodaine destruction. But godlye and pooze Mardocheus, shall bee aduanced vnto most high dignitie vnlooked for, as that which foloweth will declare.

The wonderfull
indgements of
God.

This is that iudgement of God which y^e holy ghost setteth out in the Psalmes. They which enuy, shal be rooted out, but they which waite for the Lord, shall inherit the land. And yet a litle, and the sinner shall not be, thou shalt seeke his place, and shalt not finde it. And by and by: The sinner shall ly in waite for the iust, and gnash vpon him with his teeth; but the Lord shall

laugh

laugh

laugh him to scorne, because he foreseeth that his day is come, &c. Here vnto also serueth that, which Paule saith: when as they shall say peace, and all things are safe, then shall sodaine destruction come vpon them, as paine cometh vpon a woman with childe, and they shall not escape. Let vs therefore cast off wicked securitie and carelesnes and let vs feare God, that walking in the calling of God, we may bee saued, whether the heauen fall, or the earth moue.

The sixt Chapter.

2
Cap. 6. ver. 12.

3.

THat night the King slept not &c.] In this chapter you haue an example worthy the remembrance, and wonderfull, whereby we are taught, with how great carefulnes God doth watch for the safety of the godly, to deliuer them from the waylayings of the wicked, also with how great wisdom he turneth backe vpon their owne heads the counsailes of the wicked in such sort, that spite of their teeth they must helpe the godlye.
Let

6
the Booke of Ester.

643

Let vs therefore first of all consider, how the case standeth with Mardocheus. For as concerning man, all thinges were prepared and ordeined for the ouerthrow of Mardocheus. Aman had appointed that Mardocheus should be hanged: The gallowes was set vp. The night was come, in respect whereof, the Queene, although shee would neuer so faine, might not go vnto the King, to sue for Mardocheus. Aman early in the morning goeth into the court, to talke with the King about the hanging of Mardocheus. And it was certain, that the King would deny Aman nothing, as who before had obtained the slaughter of al the Iewes, and among the Princes was most in fauour with the King. Wherefore nothing was more certaine, then that Mardocheus should by and by be hanged. But he doth neither sleepe nor slumber, which keepeth Israell. Mardocheus therefore, when as he himselfe was a godly Israelite, is so much the more cared for of the Lord, as his destruction is nearer at hand. For first of all the Lord causeth that the King that

In 2 night

The lamentable
estate of Mar-
docheus in the
iudgement of
men.



An Exposition vpon

night can take no rest, and is troubled,
 and that by this occasion out of the
 Chronicles he cometh to knowledge of
 the good turne the which Mardoche-
 us did vnto him. Therefore the king al-
 beit he know not so much, is driuen for
 Mardocheus sake to bee disquieted
 with vnrest. This is that which is
 written in the Psalmes: He suffered
 not man to hurt them, and he rebuked
 kinges for their sakes. For God hath so
 great a care of the godly, that for the sa-
 uing of them, he spareth not euē kings,
 but encombzeth them with diuers cala-
 mities and miseries. In Genesis Pha-
 rao and Abimelech being kings, are
 punished for Abrahams his sake, a
 straunger in deede, and yet a godly man
 and in fauour with God. In Iosua the
 kings of the Amorites are punished
 for the Israelites, miserable in deed, but
 yet the people of God, and walking in
 the calling of God. In Daniel, the king
 Darius is disquieted with great trou-
 ble of mind, for Daniel, but a prisoner,
 and cast vnto the Lions, but yet most
 deare vnto God. These and such like
 examples ought to moue and stirre vs
 vp,

Euen kinge are
 constrained to
 serue the god-
 ly.

bp, that aboue all other things our first
and chiefe care should be, in sayth to fol-
low the calling of God. For so shall it
come to passe, that God also will take
care of vs, and compel even most might-
tie Princes to serue vs: Kings saith he
shal be thy nurse fathers, & Queenes
thy nurse mothers.

Moreover, when as the King had
forgotten the benefite, which he had re-
ceined at the hand of Mardocheus, by
his bewraying of the cōspiracie against
the King, and Mardocheus looked for
no further fauour for that good turne, it
commeth to passe by the ordinaunce of
God, that the deede of Mardocheus
commeth vnto the kings remembrance
at that time, when as it was most be-
houefull for Mardocheus. For now
certeine destruction did hang ouer the
head of Mardocheus, but by occasion
of reading the Chronicles, he is saued.
By this example therefore we are
taught, not to be weary in well doing,
because of the forgetfulness or unthank-
fulness of men. For albeit, that men be
unmindfull of good turnes, and that as
Pindarus sayth, an old benefitt sleepeth.

The unthank-
fulness of men
ought not to
make vs weary
of well dooing

An Exposition vpon

Yet our Lord God neuer is forgetfull, but layeth vp the good turnes of men with such faithfulness, that alwaies in time most conuenient and needfull, hee dooth recompense them.

The office of
Kinges and
Princes.

You see also in this place, what God requireth in Princes. For he stirreth vp the King not vnto hunting, not vnto gaming, not vnto eating and drinking, but vnto the reading of the Chronicles, and histories, that out of these he may be put in minde of his duetie. Moses commaundeth the King to haue a copie of the law of God, and to reade in it all the dayes of his life. And it is not the duetie of Kings only, but also of all priuate persons, that they should seeke remedie for their cares and trouble either by reading, or calling to remembrance, or hearing of the worde of God. For in sorrowfull and troubled cogitations and thoughts, there is not a more present remedie then the worde of God. Be mindfull faith hee, of thy worde vnto thy seruant, wherein thou hast giuen me hope. This did comfort me in mine affliction, because thy worde hath quickened me. And
by

by and by : I was mindefull of thy iudgements from euerlasting O Lord, and haue beene comforted.

And forthwith the King said, who is in the court? For Aman was come into the inner court, &c.] Aman is called vnto the King, to shewe his minde, what good turne and honour should be done vnto him, whom the King was desirous to aduance vnto high honour. Aman therefore, hoping that himselfe was he, whom the King was minded to honour, rehearseth a singular kinde of honour. But that which he hoped should haue happened vnto him selfe, this by the Kings commaundement is giuen vnto Mardocheus. For, whom within a litle while after, Aman went to haue hanged, him he is forced in robes all magnificence and pompe to shewe vnto the Citizens, and commend him to be reuerenced. This is the right hand of the highest, wherby it cometh to passe, that the good thinges fall out vnto the godly, which the wicked hope for, and that the euill thinges happen vnto the wicked, the which they had prepared for the godly : The which for

Cap. 6. ver. 4. 5.
6. & 6.

4

5

6

A settled iudgement of God.

as much as it is a sure and settled iudgement of God, the godly at no hand ought to be offended with their unhappinesse, and happinesse of the wicked, but rather with a stout courage to go forward in true godlinesse, conceiuing sure persuation, that such shall bee the course and chaunge of things, that the godly for their temporall misery shall receiue euermlasting happinesse, and the vngodly for their happinesse, euermlasting misery.

Now as concerning gifts, the which the Kings of the Persians were wont to giue vnto those whom they did acknowledge for their friends, hath bene spoken before. And Xenophon maketh mention of them. They weare bracelets, chaines, horses decked with golden bridles. These gifts in some points agree with them that are mentioned in this Chapter.

Cap. 6. ver. 12.
&c.

12

Aman made hast to go vnto his house sorrowing, and hauing his head couered, &c.] Aman sheweth vnto his wife and friends, with great sorrow of his heart, those things which were done concerning Mardocheus.

His

His friends therfore and wife doe make
answere : If Mardocheus, before
whom thou hast begun to fall, be of
the stocke of the Iewes, thou canst
not withstand him, but shalt fall in
his sight. **See**, I pray you the quer-
thwart counsels and talk of his friends
For before, when as Mardocheus was
yet an abiect and miserable person, and
Aman mightie and in authoritie, his
friendes follow the humoz of Aman,
and by their counsailes put fire vnto
fire. For they set him on a flame, being
kindled inough before, to put to death
an innocent Jew, when as notwith-
standing it had been time then to quench
his anger, and to counsaile him from
his enterprise, for that they escape not
vpunished, which doe wrong vnto the
Jewes. But now, when as Mardo-
cheus is aduanced vnto an high place
of dignitie, and Aman somewhat thro-
wen downe from his great honour, his
friendes doe not comfort him, nor shew
him any way to escape his daunger, the
which notwithstanding at that time
was most needfull for Aman, but han-
ging betweene hope and feare, they cast
him

An Exposition vpon

What counsailes
wicked
men deserue.

him into desperation. Such counsel-
lours the wicked deserue, who when as
they heare none but such as will folow
their humour, they are most worthy to
perish by their counsailes, through
whose wisdomne they hoped to be pre-
serued.

But, whereas his friendes say vnto
him: if Mardocheus be of the seede of
the Jewes, thou canst not withstande
him, albeit they tell Aman this tale too
late, yet they rehearse vnto him y^e truth,
which was knowne vnto them as well
by experience, as by the publike fame
of the word of God, the which y^e Jewes
had given out amongst the Persians.
For no man can haue happie successe in
his enterpryse, which is iniurious, & doth
wrong vnto the seede of Abraham. For
it was sayde vnto Abraham: I will
blesse them that blesse thee, & curse
them that curse thee. And againe:
Touch not mine annointed, and do my
Prophets no harme. And in an other
place: He that toucheth you, toucheth
the apple of his eye. For the seede of A-
braham was chosen to be the people of
God, and God had ioyned himselfe in
league

league with the posteritie of Abraham. And they that are ioyned together in leagues, these among other couenants, doe also agree vpon this, that they haue common enemies, that is, that they which are enemies vnto the one, are likewise enemies vnto y other. Wherefore whosoever shall be enemy vnto the seede of Abraham, and doe wrong vnto it, the same dooth God also iudge his enemy, and to be iniurious vnto him. And who shall be able to stand, being iniurious vnto God, and the enemy of God? It vbleth in deepe sometimes to come to passe, that the lust of the vngodly doth prosper, but yet but for his time. If hee shall make stay, saith the Prophet, wait for him, because comming he wil come, and will not slacke. And Ieremy: The Lord will not put away for euer. You haue examples in the Egyptians, in Nebuchadnezar, in Antiochus, Epiphanus, & infinit others, who albeit for a season, they had good successe in persecuting the Israelites, yet at the length, they perished, and the Israelites were preserved. And now after the coming of Christ, & the spreading

A comfort for
the godly.

An Exposition vpon

the full
and the true
seed of Abra-
ham.

ding abroad of the Gospel into y^e whole worlde, the seede of Abraham and the true Israelites, are as many as beleeue in the seede of Abraham, which is Iesus Christ. This is the Church of Christ, whereof the Prophet saith: The children of them come crooked vnto thee, which haue humbled thee, & shall worship the steppes of thy feete, euen all they that did pull away from thee, and backbite thee. Wherefore that which the friends of Aman doe say of the seed of the Iewes, this now pertaineth vnto the Church of Christ. For they that persecute the Church, cannot stand, but must needs fall.

The seuenth Chapter.

Gen. 7. verse. 1.
20.

THerefore the King and Aman went in, to drinke with the Queene, &c.] Aman yet now is in some hope, for that he is hidden with the king vnto the Quenes feast, but that hope is by & by changed into desperation. For in this feast, the Queene maketh a most grieuous complaint against Aman before the king.
We

We are sold, saith she, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slaine, and to perish, And our aduersarie and enimie is this most wicked Aman. The Godlynes of Ester hath bene commended befoze. And Ester tooke this busines in hand with great faith. What is this then, that she now accuseth Aman? Are not all the godly commaunded, that they resist not euill, and that they turne the other cheeke, to him that giueth them a blow on the right cheeke? For that is no new law, giuen onely vnto Christians, but is an old law, giuen also vnto the Iewes, when it is said. Vengeance is mine, and I will repay saith the Lord. What shall we say then vnto this accusation, wherein the Queene resisteth euill, and seeketh vengeance? Doubtlesse it is no case to be condemned, but is most iust in manie respects.

Question.

Answers.

First because it is not made of lies and caulls, but is most true. Secondly because it is lawfully done, the guiltie partie being in presence and hearing it that he may haue place to defend himselfe, if he can. Last of all, because this
accu

An Exposition vpon

accusatton, is a seeking for helpe at the handes of the lawfull magistrate, and is a requesting not of vnlawfull, but of lawfull vengeance. For whereas it is said, that we must not resist euill, but leaue vengeance vnto the Lord, it is to be vnderstood of vnlawfull vengeance. For he that doth not reuenge him selfe of priuate rashnes, but craueth the lawfull helpe of the magistrate, he is truely said to leaue vengeance vnto God, that is vnto the ordinance of God. For the magistrate is herunto ordeined by god, that he should be a reuenger vnto anger, to him which hath done euill. Wherefore the accusation of the Queen is most iust, and it was not onely lawfull, but at that time needefull.

Cap. 7. ver. 8.

6

The punishment
of all the wicked.

Which when Aman heard, by and by he was astonied, &c.] Aman is astonied, holdeth his tongue, and falleth down being in a swoone vpon the bed, or bench whereon Ester sate. This is the punishment of all the wicked. For before they know the greatnes of their sinne, they liue carelessly, they despise God, they persecute the godly, they dreame that they shall be happy for euer

uer. But after that their sinne is opened and laid openly before them to bee knowne, by and by they are dumme, and despaire. And they which before could with great eloquence rehearse all maner of excuses and defences yea in their manifest lewdnes, before the iudgement of men, now God iudging them, they neither knowe nor dare once to mutter. In Matthew: he which had not on his wedding garment, heareth cruelly, friend how camest thou in, not hauing a wedding garment, and by and by he held his peace. And this is that which the Psalme also saith: Let the wicked blush, and be brought down to hell, let deceitfull lippes be made dumme. Which speak wrong against the iust in pride and in abusing.

Marke also in this place an example, by which is proued that false accusations and lies cannot long be hidden, but are opened by the ordinance of god, that the innocencie of the godly may also come to light. Wherefore nothing must be taken in hand vngodly against false accusations, but if thou canst not lawfully defend thine innocencie continue

False accusations can not long be hid.

An Exposition vpon

nue in thine innocencie and godlines.
For there will be a time in the which
not onely men, but also the Angels shal
refute the false accusations of the wic-
ked, and beare witness of the innocency
of the Godly.

Cap. 7. ver. 7.

And the king arose in his anger,
&c.] Albeit the anger of the king bes
most iust, and the punishment which
he commandeth to be done vpon Aman
be most agreeable vnto equitie, yet it is
wonder that the King doth not referre
so great a cause of so great a Prince, vn-
to the knowledge of the kinges Judges,
according vnto the custome of Persia.
But lawes are not vnfitly compared
vnto the webbes of spiders, which great
birdes breake through, and onely flies
are hanged in thsm. Wherefore albeit
Aman be most iustly punished and that
by the ordinance of god, yet that which
kinges do of heady and rash anger, as
many times it is most vniust, so is it al-
waies of an ill example.

Anger cause of
iniustice.

Cap. 7. ver. 8.

Will he also force the Queene in
my presence, &c.] Aman doubtlesse
meant not this (for his will was not to
force the Queene, but rather to sue vn-
to
to

to her humbly for his life) but yet hee
hath not to complaine of iniustice. For
it is a right and iust punishment, that
if thou haue oppressed an innocent and
guiltlesse person with false accusations
and lies, that thou thy selfe be againe
oppressed with false accusations and
lies. He doth thinke which both requite
thy with a lye, but vnto him, which be-
fore hath made a lye, there befalleth no
long, if he be plagued againe with a
lye. If thou wilt not heare, saith he, the
voice of the Lord, thou shalt at all times
sustaine false accusations, and be op-
pressed with violence, and haue none to de-
liuer thee.

And the word was not yet gone
out of the kinges mouth, &c.] The
Heb: we readeth. The word went out
of the kings mouth, and they covered
Aman his face, that is, the king com-
manded Ama to be had away vnto ex-
ecution. Wherefore the seruantes co-
uered his face, to lead him to execution.
The saying of Cicero and Lilius is
known, Go hang mā, bind his hands,
couer his head, hang him on the vn-
happy tree. Whereby it is manifest,

The condem-
ned vsed to haue
their face co-
uered.

An Exposition vpon

that the custome some times was, to couer the head, or the face of such as were condemned.

9
The end of A-
man.

But before Aman was punished, the king was told of the gallowes, which Aman had prepared for Mardocheus. Wherefore Aman was hanged on the same gallowes, by the commandement of the king. This end of life had that most cruell tyrant, and persecutor of the Church of the Lord. And this is that iudgement of God, of the which David in the Psalmes speaketh: behold he traueleth with iniustice, hee hath conceived sorow, and brought forth iniquitie. He hath opened a pit, and digged it vp, and is fallen into the ditch, which he hath made. His sorow shall be turned vpon his own pate, and his iniquitie shall light vpon his own head.

And againe: I haue seene the wicked lifted vp on high, and set vp as the Cedars of Libanus. And I passed by, and behold he was not, I sought him, and his place was not to be found. What must thou do then, when as vngodlye tyrants do persecute the Church of god,
and

and ly in wait for thy life? Must thou forsake the church by thy denyng? But this is not to fly daunger, but to fall into daunger. Must thou be out of hope of the safetie of thy selfe, and of the church? But the promise of God is most certain and most true. For that, saith he, that thou hast bene forsaken, and hated, and there was none y passed by thee, I will make thee the pride of the world, ioy in generation, vnto generation. And Christ: behold I am with you alwaies euen vnto the end of the world. Therefore thou canst doo no better, nor more profitable thing, then with a settled faith to imitate and folow thy Lord God, who both so much the more deride and laugh to scorne the wicked, by howe much the more cruelly they doe persecute godlines. The kings of the earth stood vp, and the Princes came together, against the Lord, and against his Christ. Let vs breake their bands, and cast their yoke from vs. He that dwelleth in heauen shall laugh them to scorne, and the Lord shall mocke at them. And againe: The sinner shal

L 2

watch

bar

An Exposition vpon

watch the righteous, and gnash at him with his teeth. But the Lord shall laugh him to scorn, because he foreseeth, that his day is comming.

Chapter. viij.

Cap. 3. 27. 1. 2.
3-4

That same day King Assuerus gaue vnto Queene Ester the house of Aman, &c.] Which Aman is hanged, which punishment was ordeined for godly Mardocheus. But Mardocheus is aduanced vnto the same dignitie, that Aman was indued withall before. The house of Aman also is giuen vnto Queene Ester. This plainly is that which is written in the Psalmes: The enuious shall be rooted out, but they that wait for the Lord, shall inherit the land. And yet a litle and the sinner shall not be, thou shalt seeke his place, and shalt not finde it. The meeke shall inherit the earth, and shall be delighted in the multitude of peace. Fret not therefore at him, which prospereth in his way, at the man that doth his righteousness. Cease from anger, and

and leaue raging, &c. But what? Question.
 Hath this and such other like examples
 this use, that we should learne by them
 that all the godly are in such sort deli-
 uered out of their dangers, but they
 get the wealth and dignities of the wic-
 ked in this world, like as Ester & Mar-
 docheus get the goods of Aman? No-
 thing lesse doubtlesse. There are in deed Answer.
 many examples, by which it is playne,
 that the godly being deliuered in out-
 ward dangers, haue gotten the goods
 of the wicked that oppressed them, yea
 euen in this worlde. For so Dauid, Dm d.
 whom Saule persecuted, receiued the
 kingdome of Saule. So Daniell being Daniell.
 cast into the Lions denne is preserved,
 and getteth the Princesdome of those,
 which enuiously did accuse him. But
 these examples are not to this ende set
 forth vnto vs, that we should thinke
 that the godly doe alwayes receiue the
 reward of their godlines in this life, the
 wicked being oppressed with externall
 and manifest violence, but they are set
 forth vnto vs, as heauenly scales, wher-
 by God cōfirmeth, that he wil alwayes
 saue the godly, by what meanes so euer

An Exposition vpon

The godly receive not all their happiness in this world.

that be done. For after that Adam had sinned, and death through sinne entred into this worlde, this present worlde was not ordeined to this vse, that the godly should receiue all their happiness promised vnto them by God, in it, but that in it they should learne the promises of God, and receiue them by fayth, and obtaine the feeling and fruit of the things promised in the world to come. For whereas some of the godly haue bene preserved euen in this world by outward helpe, the vngodly being oppressed, it was therefore done, that God might shew that he yet hath the rule of things, and dooth gouerne all thinges, and that by these miracles hee might strengthen the fayth of the godly, that albeit they seeme not to be deliuered in this world by myracle, yet God hath layed vp for them true deliuey and saluation, to be reuealed in his time and world. But in the meane season, let vs be contented with the Gospell or promise of God, and let vs thinke that alwayes to be spoken vnto vs, which was sayd vnto Daule, desiring, that the Angell of Satan might depart from him

him: My grace is sufficient for thee. For if God doe embrace vs with his fauour for Christes sake, what miserie I pray you, may, what death can hurt vs? Whither we liue, saith Paule, or whither we dye, we are the Lordes. For to this ende Christ died and rose againe, and was quickened, that hee might haue rule ouer the dead, and ouer the liuing.

I pray that with new letters the olde letters of Aman the traytour, &c.] Ester doth not only obtaine, that the first decree may be called backe, in the which was commaunded that in one day all the Iewes should be slaine, but obtaineth further, that againe on the same day all the enemies of the Iewes may be killed. The copie of the calling backe of this decree is among the Apocrypha, and is taken out of Iosephus, who according vnto his maner doth recite, what according vnto his iudgement might most likely be writen. Such as are also the orations of Liuius and other historiographers. Were therefore consider me the power of the right hand of the highest. The decree of

Cap. 8. ver. 3.
&c.

The power of
God.

the King set downe before, was confirmed with great authoritie, and according vnto the custome of the Persians did not seeme possible, that it might be called backe. And yet, when as y^e heart of the King is in the hand of God, the decree of the King is by the direction of God in such sort turned, so that the flat contrary is ordeined. Therefore the decrees of Kings against godlines are not so to be feared, that because of them we should forsake either the confession or defence of Godly doctrine, but we are to hope well of the mercy of God, and to go forward in the calling of God, conueauing assured perswasion, that hee which for his Church and godly doctrines sake hath sent his onely begotten sonne into the world, and raised him vp from the dead, and commanded him to sit at his right hand, will preserve his church and godly doctrine although all the power of this world do rage and gaine say it, and all the gates of hell resist it. For albeit the cruel decrees of the potentates do threaten all kind of extreme punishments, and that sometime they do oppresse the godly, and put the
to

The confession
and defence of
godly doctrine
must not be for-
saken for feare
of the decrees
of Kinges.

A most comfor-
table doctrine.

to death, yet they which dye in Christ,
dye not, but liue, perish not, but with
the whole Church are saued in Christ.
And suppose me, neither Aman to bee
hanged, nor the decree of the King to be
called backe, but the Iewes yea & Mar-
docheus himselfe also to haue bin slain
in Persia. What then: Should y^e church
haue bene destroyed? Truly neither
it in heauen, nor it on earth shuld haue
perished. For they which had died in
the faith of the seede of Abraham, that
is, of Christ; vnto these death should
haue bin gaine, and a deliuerance from
all miseries. And, that which Iohn
saith: God would haue made, that e-
uen of stones there should haue in earth
risen vp children vnto Abraham, so far
of is it, that through the tyranny of
the King of Persia, the Church before
the last day coulde haue bene taken
from the earth. For either graunt a
Church vpon earth, or else the last day
of this world. For betwene these there
is no meane. Now if the Church re-
maine vpon earth, vntill the last day of
this world, there shall remaine also all
things necessary for the Church, to wit

There shall be a
Church as long
as there is a
world.

~~THE~~ An Exposition vpon
the ministry of the Gospel and sacra-
ments, and kingdomes, and common-
wealthes, and Empires, which are the
harbours of the Church and gospel.

an example of
an honest mind.

Our error is to
be acknowl-
ged.

Cap. 8. v. 9. &c.

Why mention
is made of the
time.

You haue also in this place in King
Aluerus an example of an honest minde,
in that he had rather freely to call backe
againe his vniuersall and cruell decree, then
stubburnly to mainteine it. Others,
that they may seeme constant and wise,
do defend plaine crueltie and vngodli-
nesse. But this is in deede true vertue,
to acknowledge and amende thine er-
rou, not stubburnly to defend it. Sey-
ther oughtest thou to be ashamed, to
yeld vnto y^e sentence of the holy Ghost,
which saith: Euery man is a lyar, and
to be in the number of those which are
not perfect in this flesh, but do stil grow
in grace and knowledge of the lord our
God.

And it was the time of the thirde
moneth, which is called Siuan, &c.]
The third moneth is called of the He-
brewes Siuan, and answereth partly vnto
our May, & partly vnto Iune. And
the Scripture maketh mention of the
time, to shew how long a space the Je-
wes

wes were in most great daungers, and as it were, left without all outwarde comfort. For the decree was published in the first moneth against the Jewes, as is written before in the third Chapter. And now that decree is called back in the third moneth. Therefore y Jewes in the meane season doe abide most grievous tentations of their murther and destructions.

Now, whereas God doth not forthwith giue sensible or feelcable helpe vnto them that are in affliction and trouble, but suffereth them to be greatly troubled, he doth that in his counsaile, and for the great benefite of the godly. For he deferreth helpe, not that he will not helpe, but to exercise sayth, and stir vp in vs the calling vpon his name. Moreover, to make the deliuerance the more ioyfull, and for great affliction to giue great gladnes. For he saith in Esai, Chapter 54. For a minute, in a short time I haue forsaken thee, and in great mercies will I gather thee together. In a moment of indignation and anger I haue hid my face a litle time from thee, and in euerlasting

Wherefore God
deferreth helpe
vnto the godly.

uerlasting mercy will I gather thee. And in the lamentations of Jeremie. The Lord will not put away for ever. And if so bee hee do punish, hee will haue mercy according vnto the multitude of his mercies. Wherefore the greater and the longer that the afflictions and troubles are, so much the more certaine hope let vs conceiue of our deliuerance and safetie, and let vs uphold that hope in the calling vpon of y^e name of God.

Cap. xv. 16. 17.

But vnto the Iewes a newe light seemed to arise, ioy &c.] The Iewes do not onely obtaine deliuerance, but they are also greatly honored of the Gentiles. The Gentiles reioice with the Iewes, and through this occasion many of the Gentiles receiue the true knowledge of God, and casting away their idolatrie, become followers of true religion. An example worthy the remembrance, whereby we do know, what is the issue of the most great dangers of the people of God, or of the Church. There remained utter destruction for the Iewes in the kingdome of Persia. And without doubt many either

A worthy example.

ther of the wicked Jewes or Gentiles
said : Where is their God. But the
more greater the daunger is, so much
the more notable is the glory of our
Lord God, and of his Church. Howe
great I pray you, was the tyranny of
the Egyptians, wherewith the Israe-
lites were oppressed; And yet the more
truell it was, the more nere and more
glorious was their deliverance. It is
an old and a true saying; When cometh
Moses when the taske of the bricke is
doubled, that is, then deliverance is nee-
rest, when affliction is greatest. The
arke of the Lord being taken by the
Philistines, the religion of the Israe-
lites seemed to be lost. But by this occa-
sion, it is not onely confirmed but also
made glorious. The citie Jerusalem be-
ing destroyed by Nebucadnezer, and
the Jewes being cast forth into banish-
ment, the Church of the Lord seemed to
perish with utter destruction, but that
destroying of Jerusalem was an en-
larging of the Church, so farre off is it,
that it was the ouerthrow of the same,
as it is euident out of Daniel. And
Christ saith : They shall lay their
hands

The tyranny of
the Egyptians.

The arke ta-
ken.

The taking of
Jerusalem.

An Exposition vpon

hands vpon you, & persecute you. You shall bee deliuered vp also by your parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends. There shall be great affliction vpon the earth. But hee saith further: when these things begin to be, looke vp, and lift vp your heads, because your redemption draweth neere. With these and such other like examples hath God witnessed his wonderfull power, wisdome, and mercie, that those thinges the which among men seeme to tend vnto vtter destruction, the same vnto God are instruments of helpe vnto his Church. And that which is spoken of the safetie and deliuerie of the whole Church, the same also pertaineth vnto euery priuat person, which is a member of the Church. I do not pray for them onely, saith Christ, but also for those which shall belecue through their word in me. Wherefore calamities and troubles albeit neuer so great, ought rather to inflame vs vnto fayth, then from fayth to cast vs into desperation.

The

The ix. Chapter.

T Herefore in the twelfth moneth which is called Adar, &c.] The Jewes, saith he, began to get the vpper hand, and to reuenge them selues on their enemies. What is it then which hee saith, vengeance is mine, and I will repaye. This is the word of God, whereby is not signified, that no iniurye at any time is to be reuenged, but that it is not to be reuenged with priuate rashnes, vnlawfully, and without the calling of God, but the reuenge, wherewith the Jewes reuenge their iniuries in the kingdome of Persia, is lawfull, for they slay not euerie Persian, for then what end should there be of murder? And how could the Persians, who then were rulers, abide such crueltie of the Jewes? But they slay those, who after the publishing of the first decree of the king, did open wrong vnto the Jewes, and peraduenture tooke away their goodes, or slew some of them also before the time set downe in the decree. And they slay them not by priuate authoritie, but first by the authoritie of God, who promised

Cap. 9. ver. 2.

All reuenge
not forbidden.

An Exposition vpon

the Israelites victorie ouer their enemies, secondly, by the authoritie of the king of Persia, who by publike decrees did giue the sword into their hands, to be reuenged of their enemies. Wherefore this is God his vengeance, the which God repayeth vnto the wicked, by the ministry of the Iewes. And this example is set forth vnto vs, not that wee should vse reuenge of iniuries, vpon priuate authoritie (do good, saith he, vnto those which hate you): but that wee might acknowledge the seueritie and sharpenesse of the word of God against the wicked persecutors of the people of God, and that in persecution we shuld by fayth looke for most certaine deliuerance, and be obedient vnto the calling of God.

the vse of this
example.

Cap. 9. ver. 5.

the Egyptians.

The Iewes smote their enemies with a great destructio, &c. The same day that the Iewes should haue bene slaine, are their enemies slaine. The same example you haue before in Amas, who was hanged on the same gallows, which he had prepared for Mardocheus. So the Egyptians were overwhelmed in the same sea, vnto the which

they had driuen the Israelites to bee ouerwhelmed. So Saule also, who put David vnto the Philistines to be slain, was overcome by the Philistines, and David got the kingdome of Saule. These examples partly teach faith in suffering of persecution of the wicked, and partly the feare of God, that we beware of doing wrong vnto others. For that which thou mindest vniustly to do vnto an other, the same by the ordinance of God shal fall vpon thine own head. Syrach saith: He which throweth a stone vp on high it will fall vpon his owne pate. And a crafty blow shal ouercome the woundes of the craftie. He that diggeth a ditch, shal fall into it. He that setteth vp a stone for his neighbor, shal stumble at it. He that layeth a snare for an other, shal perish in the same.

And that the ten sonnes of Amā may be hanged on the gallows, &c.] Ester is not content, that Aman is hanged, but she maketh request that the ten sonnes of Aman may be hanged also. Is this a point of godlines? Is it not written; The fathers shall not be

Cap. 9. ver. 13.

14.

Question.

¶

slaine

An Exposition vpon

Answer.

God iudging
no man is inno-
cent.

A lesson for pa-
rents.

slaine for the sonnes, nor the sonnes
for the fathers, but euery one shal dy
for his own fault? And againe : The
sonne shall not beare the iniquity of his
father? Verie well. If so be the sonne bee
innocent and guiltles. But if the Lord
do iudge, neither the father nor the son
is innocent. For in thy sight no man a-
liue is iustified. In the flood the Lord
iudged. And therefore both fathers and
infantes perished together. In the bur-
ning of Sodome, the Lord iudged.
Wherefore as well fathers as children
were consumed with fire. So also in
the kingdome of Persia the Lord iudg-
ed against Aman, and the manifest e-
nimies of the Jewes. Wherefore the
sonnes of Aman, and of the enimies,
are not wrongfully slaine. This is
written for the admonition of parents,
that they may be stirred vp to embrace
godlines, least that together with them
selues they drawe their children also
vnto destruction, that which came to
passe in Ely, Saule, Ieroboam, Ahab,
and many others. This seueritie and
sharpnes of God is extant in the ten
commandements, Visiting the iniqui-
ty

te of the fathers vpon the children, vnto
the third and fourth generatiō of them,
that hate me.

Neither was their substance spoi-
led by them, &c] The Iewes tooke
not the goodes of them that were slain,
either for that they were put into the
kings Exchequer, either for that being
warned by Mardocheus, with howe
great seueritie and sharpnes God pu-
nished Saule, when as hee had reserued
some thing out of the spoile of Amalec,
they abhorred all the goods of Aman
the Amalechite, and the other enimies,
who albeit they them selues were not
Amalechites, yet because they consen-
ted with Aman, they also with all their
goods were iudged subiect vnto the
curse. Consider me now how horrible
a thing vngodlines is, because that it
maketh accursed and abhominable, not
onely the man, which committeth it,
but also the man his familie, his sub-
stance, and what so euer goeth vnder
the name of his goods. Therefore that
thou lay not thy selfe, with thy fami-
ly, & all thy goods open vnto the curse,
take vpon thee, the studie of true god-

Cap. 9. ver. 15.
&c.

How horrible
a thing vngod-
liness is.

lines, by faith in Christ Iesus, by which one thing it will come to pas, that thou shalt obtaine the heauenly blessing of all things.

20
Cap. 9. ver. 20
&c.

Philo.

This booke
written for the
benefite of the
whole church.

Therefore Mardocheus wrot all these things, and being conteined in letters, &c.] This place moueth some to thinke, that Mardocheus wrote this booke of Ester. But Philo in his fragment saith thus: Ioiakin the high priest wrote the actes of Ester, and ordeined the memory of Purim, Mardocheus by letters exhorting him therunto. Out of these wordes of Philo you haue that Mardocheus in deede noted the pointes of this history, and that Ioiakin the high priest wrote the booke, and by his authoritie confirmed the ordeining of them, which they called Purim that is lottes. The actes therefore of Ester were commended vnto posterity after two sortes: the one, by writing published and set abroad, the other by ordeining of holy daies called Purim. For this booke was written, neither for Mardocheus, nor for Ester, nor for those Jewes which liue at this day, but for the whole Church of God. And it was

9
the Booke of Ester.

was witten not to commend the name of any one particular person, as for example, either Mardocheus or Ester: but to commend the name of our Lord God, to wit, that the church by this history may know, with how great care power and wisdom God doth defend his people, also with how great severity and sharpness he tumbleth downe the wicked persecutors of his people.

The Jewes, which in our time reioyce on this behalfe, do maruellously please themselves in the reading of this historie. And if so be any godly magistrate do handle them sharply, & drive them out of his borders, they giue him the name of Aman, and this only they hope and gape for, that it may be lawful for them to be reuenged of their enemies, that is, of the Christians, among whom they liue, like as this history beareth record that the Jewes in Persia tooke vengeance on their enemies. This is the thankfulness of the wicked Jewes, the which they render vnto the Christians for their entertainment, namely, for a great good turne, great euill turnes, that is, mur-

Against the
Iewes of our
time.

~~THE~~ An Exposition vpon

ther and slaughter. But they haue not
 to reioyce at this time of the story of E-
 ster. For this story perteyneth vnto
 the people and Church of God. But the
 Iewes, because they haue cast of christ,
 the true seede of Abraham, they are no
 moze the people, nor his Church, but
 they apperteine vnto Ismael, and Esau,
 who alwayes persecuted the true seede
 of Abraham. And because that they
 hate the true Israelites, which are the
 Christians, with y same hatred, wher-
 with Aman in times past hated them,
 it is plain, that they are the cosins and
 kinned of Aman the Amalechite, which
 nation alwayes with extreme hatred
 thirsted after the vtter destruction of the
 Israelites. Wherfore so far of is it, that
 the Iewes which now are, may pro-
 mise vnto themselues any hope of their
 deliuerance, and of the destruction of
 the Christians, out of this booke, that
 rather in Aman there is extant and re-
 maining a manifest example, that in as
 much as once they haue begun to fall
 before the Church of Christ, they can
 neuer rayse vp themselues againe, un-
 lesse they conuert vnto Christ, who on-
 ly

The Iewes of
 our time are the
 kindred of A-
 man.

ly is our saluation.

Further, the holy dayes, which are ordeined, are called, Purim, that is, Lottes. For this word Pur, doth signifie a Lot. And they are so called of that Lot, by which Aman sought out a happy moneth and day to slay the Jewes, of which is written before, in the third Chapter. But what is it, you wil say, that they ordeine new holy dayes, whereas notwithstanding it is written in the law: The thing that I commaunde thee, that only doe. Put nothing there to, nor take nothing there from. Now the number of holy dayes in the law is certeine and set downe. Why then are there new holy dayes added vnto these? Esaias also saith: They worship mee in vaine, teaching doctrines, the precepts of men. Shall we say then, that the ordeining of these feastes of Purim was a deuise of man? Of this matter we are to thinke thus: that when as the Scripture speaketh of the lawe of Moses: Thou shalt neither put there to, nor take therefrom, he speaketh only of the worship of God. And I now call the worship of God, those holie things

The feast of Purim or Lottes.

Question.

Answer.

Ieroboam.

things which were ordeined for y^e cleansing of sinnes, such as are the sacrifices, and whatsoeuer thinges appertained vnto the ceremonies and ordering of sacrifices. And therefore Ieroboam is sayd to haue put some thing vnto the law, for that he ordeined new worshippings, new kindes of sacrificising, or remoued the sacrifices vnto vnlawfull places contrary vnto the law. So they are sayd to haue added somewhat vnto the law, which sacrificed in high places, in groues, and in other vnlawfull places. Wherefore, albeit that by these sacrifices they did thinke that they worshipped the true God, yet they sinned wickedly against God, because that they abused the sacrifices against the word of God.

But by the ordeining of the dayes of Purim, the high Priest and Mardocheus did not sin, because when as the law sayth: But nothing thereto, nor take any thing therefrom, it speaketh not of politike ordinances, the which are ordeined for publike quiet sake, or for any other present profit. In this degree are to bee placed not onely those thinges

things, which after the law of Moses were ordeined concerning the successi-
on of heires (of which sort is that which Philo mentioneth of the successiō of A-
hischarim.) And it is likely that many
things of that kinde were ordeined by
the Kinges in Israell, which in deede
were not against the law, and yet were
not expressely conteined in the law. (For
what law maker could in a small vo-
lume comprehend all cases falling out
among men, in so great a multitude of
people?) These, I say, and such other
like things are not alone to be placed
in the number of politike ordinances,
but also those things which were or-
deined to preserve the memory of God
his miracles, and to put men in minde
of the present calamitie and miserie of
things. To this vse was the singing of
Psalmes ordeined, namely, not that
God by the singing of them should bee
made mercifull and fauourable, but
that men by the Psalmes should be in-
structed vnto godlinesse, and be put in
minde of the mercy of God confirmed
also by miracles. To this purpose Sa-
muell ordeined the image or stone of
helpe,

Singing of
Psalmes.

Samuell.

~~1~~ An Exposition vpon

Fastes.

helpe, as it is w^ritten in the first booke of Samuell, Chap. 7. not that it shuld be wo^rshipped, but that it might bee a publike testimony of y^e victo^ry, which the Israelites got ouer the Philistines by diuine and heauenly miracle. Fastes also were vsed, not as a wo^rship of God, that is, as a cleansing of sinnes, but as an ordinance of man, whereby men might be put in minde of the present daunger, and be kept in the duetie of prayer. So also the feast dayes of Purim, were ordeined, not as a wo^rship of God, that is, a satisfaction o^r making amends fo^r sinnes, but as a ciuill ordinance, the which might beare record, that the things which are w^ritten in Ester, are not the deuices of men, but were in deed so done, that by this yearly remembrance also the mercy of God might be declared towards his church, and his seneritie towarde the wicked openly set fo^rth. Wherefo^re to ordeine these feastes o^r holy dayes, was not to adde any thing vnto the lawe, but rather to preserve and keepe the lawe, which requireth that the marvellous wo^rkes of God should be commended
and

and set forth.

The tenth Chapter.

ANd King Assuerus layde a tribute vpo the whole land, &c.] Those things which are rehearsed in this place of the tributes, and greatnes of the Empire of Darius, or Assuerus, we haue declared before. And Herodotus hath left some thing in wryting cōcerning this matter. And I would to God that those Chronicles of the Medes and Persians were extant, of the which mention is made in this place. For out of these wee might more certainly know all thinges then out of those fragmentes and peeces of wrytings. And yet great thanks are to be giuen vnto the Lord our G D D, that euen those fewe, through his goodness, after so long a time of yeares, in so great alteration of kingdoms among so many warres and burninges, in so many chaunces, and so great daunger of thinges, haue bene preserved, and continued vnto our times.

Cap. 10. v. 1. &c.

Chronicles of the Medes and Persians perished.

Procuring the wealth of his people,

3
Chap. 10. ver. 3.

~~177~~ An Exposition vpon

ple, &c.] The prayse of Mardocheus is great, for that he had so great care of the people or Church of God, that being yet but a private person, he aduentured all perill, for the helping of the Church of God, and afterwards being aduanced vnto great dignitie, imployed all his trauell vnto the preservation of the Church. This is the duetie of Princes, whereby truely they doe not only further and helpe the Church, but also prouide for their owne safetie. Neither is there any other way, whereby they may be saued, vnesse they according vnto their abilitie and calling, doe preserve the Church.

The duetie of
Princes.

The rest, which followeth after this section of the tenth Chapter in the common translations, are not Canonically, nor found in the Hebrew booke of Ester, but are brought hither out of Iosephus, and counted among the Apocrypha, that is, hidden or layd vp at home, the which albeit they bring their private profite, yet they haue no publike authoritie. We haue spoken of these also before, some things.

Apocrypha.

Wherefore to knit vp this matter
withall

Withall we will set downe that saying
of Paule: what thinges soeuer are writ-
ten before, they are written for our les-
ning, that through patience and com-
fort of the Scriptures we might haue
hope.

Glorie be to God on high.

*Of Darius the sonne of Hystaspes, Whom
Metasthenes calleth Artaxerxes Af-
suerus, and which was the husband of
Ester. Out of Iustine.*

After Cyrus, succeeded his Son
Cambyfes, who to his fathers
Empire, by conquest annexed
Egypt. But being offended
with the superstition of the Egyptians,
he commaunded the temples of Apis
and other gods to be beaten down. Fur-
thermo, also, he sent an armie to de-
stroy the renowned temple of Ammon
which armie being ouerwhelmed with
tempestes and heapes of sand, was vt-
terly destroyed. After this, he dreamed
that his brother Smerdes should raig-
n after him, which dreame made him so
afraid, that he sticke not after sacri-
ledge

Cambyfes suc-
ceedeth Cyrus.

Power will haue
no peere.

An Exposition vpon

ledge to commit most vnnaturall murder in killing his owne brother. For it was an hard matter, that hee should spare his owne kinne, who in spight of religion did violently sette vpon the goddes. As an instrument to bring this cruell acte to passe, he chose a freend of his, one of the Magies called Comaris. In the meane while he him selfe being sore wounded in the thigh with his sword falling out of the sheath by it selfe, died, and so suffered worthy punishment, whether it were for the murder committed, or for the sacriledge already committed. The tidings hereof came to the wise man, or euer it was openly known that the king was dead, he dispatched his purpose, and hauing slaine Smerdis who by right shoulde haue bene king, set vp his owne brother, Oropastes in his steede. For hee was very like the kings brother in making and fauour. By reason whereof (no man misdeeming any such treason to be wrought) in steed of Smerdis, Oropastes was made king. The which thing was the easier to bee kept from knowledge, because that among the Persians

Tyrants cannot
continue long.

The great treason
of Comaris.

Oropastes reigned
in steed of
Smerdis.

Persians (for the more honour and re-
 uerence of his person) the king sheweth
 not him selfe bare faced. The wise men
 therefore (thereby to winne the fauour
 of the comminalltie) released vnto them
 three yeares tribute, and exempted them
 from the warres during all the saide
 terme, to the intent they might esta-
 blish by bribery, and flattery the king-
 dome that they had gotten by treason
 and pollicie. Which thing was first sus-
 pected by one Orthanes a noble man,
 right sage in coniecturing. Therefore he
 sent to his daughter (which was one of
 the kings concubins) to know if he that
 was king, were the sonne of king Cy-
 rus or no? She sent him word that she
 her selfe could not tell, nor yet learne
 the truth at any of her felowes, because
 euery one of them were kept alone by
 them selues. Then he sent her word a-
 gaine, that she shoulde feelee about his
 head when he were a sleepe. For Cam-
 bises had cut of both the wise mans
 eares before. Her father being certified
 that the king had no eares, bewrayed
 the matter to the noble men of the realme
 and compelled them to binde theselues
 with

The treason is
 mistrusted.

The treason
 cometh to
 light.

An Exposition vpon

Counsell can
not be kept
long in a mul-
titude.

Necessitie gi-
ueth courage
the zeale of
Gobrias to his
countrie.

The end of vsur-
ped authoritie.

with an othe, that they should confound
the wrongfull king. There were but se-
uen priuy to this conspiracie, who in-
continently, (least if they had time and
space to bethinke them, the matter
might be by some of the company be-
trayed) with euery man his weapon
vnder his golwe, went straight to the
pallace: where hauing slaine such as
withstood them, they came to the place
where the wise men were, who wanted
no courage to defend them selues. For
they drew their weapons and slew
two of the conspiracie. Neuerthelesse,
the other being more in number, caught
hold of them. Of which, Gobrias ha-
uing one of the wise men fast in his
armes, and perceiuing that his fellows
stayed their hands for doubt of striking
him, in stead of the wise man, (because
the matter was done in a darke place)
bad them thrust their swordes into the
wise man, though it were through his
bodie. Notwithstanding fortune so ru-
led the matter, that the wise man was
slaine, and he escaped unhurt. The wise
men being thus slaine, the noble men
attained great honour for recovering
the

the Booke of Ester.

the kingdome, but much more honour
 did they attayne, in that when they
 were in controuersy for the kingdome,
 they coulde agree amonge themselves.
 For both in prowesse and estate they
 were so equal, that it should haue bene
 a harde matter for the people to haue
 sayd which of them was woorthiest.
 Therefore they inuented a way a-
 mong themselves, whereby to commit
 y^e determination of their matter to God
 & good fortune. They agreed amonge
 themselves that at a time appointed,
 euery one of them should come before
 the paller on horse-backe, by y^e breake
 of the day: & he whose horse neyed first
 before the rising of y^e Sunne, should be
 king. For the Persians beleue, y^e there
 is no god but the sonne, and that horses
 are hallowed vnto him. There was a-
 mong the conspirato^rs, one Darius the
 sonne of Histaspis: To whom takinge
 thought how he might make himselfe
 king, his horskeper saide, that if there
 were nothing else to let his purpose, he
 should take no thought for the matter,
 for the day should be his. Whereupon,
 the night before the day appointed, he

A singular ex-
 ample of mode-
 stie in great
 estates.

R.

brought

An exposition vpon

The pollicie
of a horſekee-
per.

brought his maiſters horſe into the ſame place, & there put him to a mare, thin- king that for deſire of the mare, & thing would come to paſſe, as afterward it did in deede. The next morning euery one of them being come at the houre appointed, (Darius horſe knowing the place) of courage to the mare, forth- with neyed aloud, and (the reſidue be- ing ſlow) firſt of all the companie, gaue his maiſter a token of good lucke. The reſt of the Lordes were of ſuche mo- deſtie, that as ſoone as they hearde the token of good lucke, by and by they leapt of their horſes, and ſaluted Da- rius by the name of king. All the peo- ple alſo, following the iudgment of the princes, tooke him for their king. And ſo the kingdome of the Perſians reco- uered by the prowelle of ſeuene of the nobleſt men of all the realme, was in the twinkling of an eie brought into one mans hand againe. It paſſeth cre- dite that they ſhould deale in this mat- ter, with ſo great reuerence and low- lines, conſidering that they ſpared not their liues to wreſt it out of the wiſe mens handes. Although (to ſay & truth) beſides

Darius is made
king by the
neying of an
horſe.

the Booke of Ester.

besides manhood, personage, fauoure,
and prowesse, meete and worthe soe
great a kingdome, Darius was also
neere of aliaunce vnto the auncient
kinges of Persia.

Augustine, in his Epistle to Edicia.
199. Of the apparell of Esther,
and of her marriage with
Assuerus.

And albeit you should be constreined by some hard condition, yet in proud & gorgeous apparell, you might haue an humble and lowly heart. For amongst our fathers, Esther that Queene fearing God, worshipping God, subiect vnto God, yet in subiection obeyed and serued her husbände as king that was a straunger, not worshipping the same god which she worshipped, who when as with the extreme daunger, not onely of her selfe, but also of her Nation, which at that time was the people of God, shee lay prostrate and falling down before the Lord in prayer, in her prayer shee said, that her royall apparell was vnto her

In fine apparell
there may be a
mecke and humble
minded.

An exposition vpon

**but as a menstruous cloth, and her for
praying, God by and by heard, who
being the looker into the heart, knew
that she spake the trueth. And she
verily had one to her husbando,
who had manie wiues, & one
that was a worshipper of
strange and false
gods.**

**Of this Darius, Herodotus in
Taleia, writeth more
at large.**

FINIS.

